

THE REACTION
FROM
AGNOSTIC SCIENCE

MADDEN

E. VIII - 10

THE
REACTION FROM AGNOSTIC
SCIENCE

BY
REV. W. J. MADDEN,
AUTHOR OF
"DISUNION AND REUNION."

Second Revised Edition.

ST. LOUIS, MO., 1899.
PUBLISHED BY B. HERDER,
17 SOUTH BROADWAY.

Nihil obstat.

P. G. HOLWECK,

Censor Theologiar.

S. Ludovici, die 3 Aprili 1899.

Imprimatur.

† JOHN J. KAIN,

Archbishop of St. Louis.

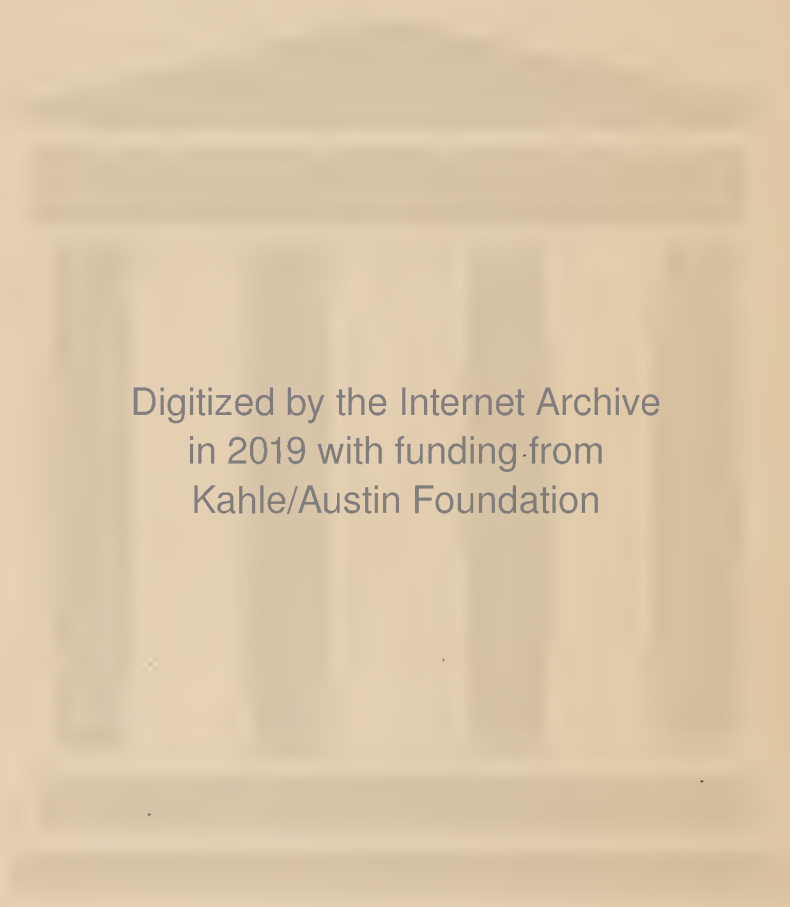
St. Louis, Mo., April 5th, 1899.

Copyright, 1899,

By JOS. GUMMERSEACH.

—BECKTOLD—
PRINTING AND BOOK MFG. CO.
ST. LOUIS, MO.

To
those whose hearts
are troubled
by the burden and the mystery
of life,
and to those who
say they can not believe,
this book
is kindly dedicated.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

PREFACE.

In another work entitled "*Disunion and Reunion*" which I ventured to publish some time ago (Burns & Oates), the question treated could interest only those who still hold by the Christian name, and still cherish a belief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But unfortunately there is in our day, as is well known, a large class, who while living among Christian populations, and conforming outwardly, and often unconsciously, to the standard of Christian morality, because compelled by custom and convenience to do so, at the same time openly renounce all belief in Christian dogma.

"Our kinsmen in the flesh" and of Christian ancestry, they surely ought to be included in the appeals, now so earnestly made, for religious reunion. And I think a strong appeal may be addressed directly to them, at this moment, by pointing out, that the agnostic science which in our day has been entirely responsible for the prevailing unbelief, has proved unsatisfying and

disappointing in its conclusions; that there is more unrest among men now than before it began its destructive criticisms, and that many of its own prominent professors are showing signals of distress. It will be practical, also, to bid them weigh the value and use to men in their every-day life of the conclusions of faith as against the conclusions of unbelief and thence consult for their personal safety.

Such is the simple, and let us hope, useful aim of this book.

It is a short book. I have purposely kept it short. In a busy age it will have a better chance of being read.

Modesto, Cal., 1899.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

NEED OF THE REACTION	- - - -	9
----------------------	---------	---

CHAPTER II.

SIGNS OF THE REACTION	- - - -	21
-----------------------	---------	----

CHAPTER III.

WHAT PROVOKED THE PROTEST	- - -	36
---------------------------	-------	----

CHAPTER IV.

AGNOSTIC SOCIALISM	- - - -	49
--------------------	---------	----

CHAPTER V.

INSTANCES OF REAL SOCIALISM	- - -	69
-----------------------------	-------	----

CHAPTER VI.

OTHER QUESTIONS UNANSWERED BY SCIENCE		87
---------------------------------------	--	----

CHAPTER VII.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF SCIENCE	- - -	98
----------------------------	-------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

"LACHRYMÆ RERUM"	-	-	-	-	107
------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

"STATIO BENE FIDA"	-	-	-	-	123
--------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER X.

IMPORTANT AND PRACTICAL	-	-	-	137
-------------------------	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

PRESENT DAY DANGERS TO BELIEVERS	-	-	152
----------------------------------	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

MYSTERIES	-	-	-	-	-	167
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

FURTHER DIFFICULTIES AND THEIR ANSWERS	172
--	-----

THE REACTION FROM AGNOSTIC SCIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Need of the Reaction.

As I sit writing this morning there lies before me the smiling scene of a fertile California valley with the famous Lick Observatory crowning Mount Hamilton on the ridge of the Sierras beyond. And the thought has come to me that if some wild and loosened flood burst suddenly over that valley, its devastating waters and the wreck they should leave behind would fittingly illustrate, without much exaggeration, the desolating infidelity that over a hundred years ago broke over more than one country which used to pass as believing in the "argument for things that do not appear." Up to that, men deemed it reasonable to live in a simple trusting faith and bore more equably the toil and the burden of existence. Since then, the air is filled with questionings and doubts, minds are troubled

and restless, and from the view of many, the promise and sustaining hope of future and of better things have faded away.

But just as there have really been floods in that valley in other days and now its soil is all the richer for their coming, so, perhaps, will the souls of men be better for that other and more disastrous flood when its troubled waters shall have receded. And happily there are, in these later years, unmistakable signs that they are subsiding.

But a little while ago the agnostic scientist, always referred to as "that eminent man of science," was for worldly-minded people the supreme pontiff of all knowledge worth knowing. In pity for a generation whose "intelligence was limited and whose mind was warped by old superstitions that were said to be revealed because they could not be proved," he undertook to explain the universe on a rational and scientific basis. A tone of superiority and secure self-confidence marked all his pronouncements. His style was magisterial. The crowd like that. It is imposing. Here are men, they say, who make you feel they are sure of what they teach; let us listen to them; and they listened. The disciples of science in the mid-century were many and credulous. The output of the press proved it. Great books

full of the new knowledge went through large editions. Popular science lectures were established in all the great centres. The men of agnostic science went on tour. They had crowded and enthusiastic audiences. Their novel theories and speculations became the fashion of the hour in universities, in drawing rooms, and in workingmen's unions. Not to be able to talk Darwin and the Origin of Species was to be very uninformed. Not to have at least dipped into the hard and ponderous meditations of Herbert Spencer was to be incompletely educated. Not to fall into praise of the classic diction of Tyndall — not to be an admirer of the bolder and more downright style of his twin-star, Mr. Huxley, and not to know at least the drift of their daring and sure views, was to be a very old-fashioned person and much "behind the times." Not to be tinged a little with the crabbed, sour scorn of Thomas Carlyle and gloat over the savage anger of the omniscient judgments he chartered himself to pass on all mankind, was to be unadvanced. Not to be tolerant of Mr. Leslie Stephen in his open denial and even flouting of the Divinity, or his brother — one of the judges of England's High Court of Justice — in his restless theological doubtings, was to be illiberal. To speak disapprovingly of the mental gym-

nastics of James Anthony Froude in his curious pilgrimage from Anglican monasticism to the free shrine of the modern unbelief, was to undervalue true freedom of mind. Such was the feeling which to a very large extent prevailed in England and the English-speaking world not so long ago. There have been signs, too, that similar motions of the scientific spirit had taken place in most European countries. Reviews of the foreign publications in Germany, France, Russia, Sweden, Belgium and even Holland and Switzerland, made it clear that this emancipation of human thought from the trammels of the supernatural, was triumphantly proclaimed far and near. In fact from the year 1850 to the end of the next quarter of our century the agnostic scientists had a fair and free field. They had the reading multitude at their feet. Men would listen now to no other instructors, and great things were vaguely hoped to come from the invigorating freedom of universal speculation. All beliefs and traditions that hitherto prevailed were to be put aside, and an entirely new direction was to be given to thought and an entirely different sort of knowledge to be acquired. It appeared that this could not be done without throwing discredit and obloquy on the older order, and very bold

words were now said out loud, which formerly were suppressed for fear of coventry. "Oh, the freedom and the freshness of it," said one young man, who afterwards became quite famous, when he read for the first time that blaspheming enigma called *Sartor Resartus*.*

No patient hearing could be gained for the literati of the old and orthodox side in all that time. Many were chary of criticising the new theories, lest they should be set down as opposed to learning and progress. And that was a terrible label to attach to one's self. A few prominent Catholic writers entered the list, but as a Frenchman finely says of them, it was only to carry on a *coquetterie réglée* with the scientists of skepticism. For, while guarding their orthodoxy by referring the ultimate cause of all things to the action of an omnipotent Creator, they freely embraced the theory of evolution, *i. e.*, the development by gradual process of everything and every one from identical germs.

With the best intention, no doubt, they made a sweeping sacrifice of the literal sense of Genesis, and wrenched somewhat violently the text of the story that men so long deemed sacred, as a concession to those

* See Mr. Huxley's obituary on Tyndall in "Nineteenth Century," February, 1894.

who were openly ignoring God, and denying all divine and supernatural action, in the origin and growth of the world and its denizens.

Now, evolution is not of such demonstrable certainty that it does not leave us yet free, to reject it if we choose, and while giving all due credit to men of great ability like Mr. Mivart and Mr. W. S. Lilly, we may be permitted to question, whether all their ingenious pains to set up an orthodox evolution, have been repaid by any good result. They certainly made very little impression on the agnostics, and their fellow-believers are not much more enlightened, while not a few may have suffered from a disturbance of views to no useful purpose.

There was one instance, however, of an eminent lay-writer, whose steps were not so mincing in the lists. In a controversy with the biggest man among the agnostics, in fact the very inventor of that peculiar name — agnostic — Mr. Gladstone held the old-fashioned language of an uncompromising Christian. He spoke of “Our Lord” and “miracles” and “Satan” and “divine teaching” as a matter of course, without the least show of human respect before those mighty men of science. It was edifying to believers, to see this veteran of po-

litical strife make, at his great age, so brave a stand for the supernatural, and though he may have failed to convince his individual antagonist, his sincerity extorted from Mr. Huxley a handsome compliment at the close of the argument; for he applied to the great statesman the words invented by Shakespeare for Cleopatra: —

“ Age cannot wither him,
Nor custom stale his infinite variety.”*

But the day was coming, when a voice of protest was to be raised, not from among the believers, but from the ranks of the friends and sympathizers with godless science. These men of beliefless science were to be arraigned, and at length asked to show, where was the benefit to their fellow-men, from their theories so loudly and confidently proclaimed. They were to be summoned to point out what reliable comfort they had built up, or were going to build up, to take the place of the ancient beliefs, that had been a protecting shelter to men for ages long.

The public mind was more or less prepared, for this turn of events. People had been awed, but had now grown a bit wearied

* See the “Nineteenth Century” — Gladstone-Huxley Controversy on the miracle of the swine.

of the solemn, tiresome omniscience of these men, and so were in a mood to enjoy the revolt in their camp.

That pontiff of agnosticism — Prof. Huxley — shortly before his death (for alas! even so mighty a dictator in letters is not immune from the common lot of mortals) — composed a general preface, for the final reissue of his works. In this, he gives the public a bit of his early mental history, in his characteristic style. He says, that in the beginning of his scientific career, he found stretching across his path, and barring his way, the old traditions of revelation. They were regarded, as sacred and impassable. They were too high to climb, he tells us, and to crawl under them, he would not condescend — he disliked mud. In this dilemma, he bethought him of a third way to surmount the barrier. He would hew his way through, hack and demolish it! This he proceeded to do, and to his great relief, found it to be only lath and plaster and cardboard — mere rubbish! Having thus rid himself of the Bible, and all its tales, he marched unimpeded along his scientific pathway, with what practical results time, and his friends are beginning to show.

However, he was not summoned, from that happy pathway he had cleared for himself, before he was to witness, by an un-

pleasant irony, other and just as manly hands as his, beginning to hack, and hew, the barrier of scientific theories, which he and his colleagues were at such pains to erect, across the pathway lighted by faith.

The protest, which is beginning to be heard, and which is quite a notable feature, in the history of contemporary secular thought, is not directed, it need scarce be said, against scientists of that patient and unassuming class, who do no hacking, and hewing of sacred things. There are those, who confine their scientific researches, solely to the material benefit of their fellow-men. Their laborious days have been given, to smooth the rough places of life, and make the human lot more bearable, through the exceeding convenience of their ingenious inventions, and marvelous discoveries. But these men never cast disturbing trouble into the souls of their fellow-men, nor sow disquieting doubts, in human minds. Such scientists are greatly, and deservedly honored. Watts, Stevenson, Thompson (Lord Kelvin), Nasmyth, Pasteur, Quatrefages, Virchow, these are the men, leaders of a large and useful class, who are justly regarded, as benefactors of their kind. Any one of these, is of more real worth to his fellows, than all the monarchs, or statesmen, or great captains, who spent their

days amid the dire tragedies of human slaughter, which fill so largely the history of the race. There are few among living men, who would not rather be a Pasteur than an Alexander, or Napoleon, a Bismarck, or a Moltke.

It is not against scientists, such as these that either complaint can be made, or reaction take place. The challenge, that is now beginning to be delivered, concerns only that class of scientists — biologists and naturalists, who have pushed their work, otherwise useful perhaps and lawful, beyond its legitimate limits, and assuming a dictatorship over contemporary thought, arrogantly demand, the surrender of all previous beliefs, in favor of their scientific researches — proposing these as the proper, and only rational source of human knowledge.

Such a summons, issued in a tone of assured authority, has considerably disturbed a multitude of minds, without adding anything to their happiness, and nothing whatever, to the hopes, that men will ever refuse to relinquish.

The chief disturbers of the world's mental peace in our time, have been Hegel, Schleiermacher, Strauss, Hartmann, Vacherot, Taine, Renan, Darwin, Tyndall, Spencer and Huxley — a formidable phalanx.

To these, on the literary side, must be added the numerous theorists of the "social question," who ignore the supernatural in everything, that touches the human condition. Such are Karl Marx, Kropotkine, John Morley, Carlyle, Hugo, Elisée Reclus, Henry George, Louis Blanc, Leslie Stephen, and the usual host of their imitators in the public press.

As may be supposed, the religious leaders and teachers, have not been silent on the side of belief. But such apologists, are scarcely regarded at all, by those other men. They are set aside, and superiorly despised. Protests, merely professional, are not to be taken seriously. They are Ciceronian pleadings, *pro domo suâ*. In self-protection, such protests *have* to be made — a mere matter of course, that everybody expects, and nobody minds. Interested witnesses, are out of court in this important discussion, and so forth. The words of professional religious teachers, gave no alarm whatever to these agnostic scientists. They treated them as something to be amused at, or as a subject for their rail-lery, and lofty scorn.

However, it was entirely another matter, and much more serious, when murmurs of misgiving and protest, began to be heard, from the men behind them, from those,

whom they fully believed, to be sympathisers and supporters — from men, who lived far from the camp of the clericals.

Some few years ago, vague hints began to be heard, like stray shots, regarding the unsatisfying results of scientific conclusions, as the panacea for our mortal woes. A patient hearing had, hitherto, been given to the agnostic scientists, and men had been waiting in confident expectation, for their announcements. The magisterial tone of these eminent men of science had inspired — nay, imposed, that confidence.

In old times kings “touched for the evil.” In our time — democracy, having exploded the divine in kings, and most other things — it was science that was to touch for the evils of humanity. But, now, that its magic hand had been, for some time, stretched forth to heal, it is not apparent that the evils of poor humanity are growing any lighter, or less. In fact, never before, have they been so pressed upon the public attention, or louder plaints uttered by the masses, as in our day. Science, it seems, has been “touching” in vain. In all its boasted pharmacopœia, there is no potent drug, for humanity’s ills. And so, men, naturally, began to ask of the scientists, “What practical good, has come to the world from the years of your laborious re-

searches — is a mere negative result, all we are to get for our patient waiting? ”

CHAPTER II.

Signs of the Reaction.

The first formulated, and, indeed, formidable complaint, came from a French academician, M. Ferdinand Brunetière. This was a startling surprise, to the agnostic school, and caused a great sensation. He was not only a man of recognized eminence, in the literary world, but he always passed for a leader among Parisian *libres penseurs*. He published in the Review, of which he is the *Directeur-gérant* an article, treating of what, he very roundly and boldly called “the successive bankruptcies of science.”

This article marks the date of the aggressive reaction against the scientists, of which we now see the rising tide.

Rénan, in his usual tone of tranquil confidence, had announced, that “religious beliefs will slowly disappear from the world, mined by primary instruction, and by the predominance of science, over literature, and education.” Prof. Huxley wrote: “If the scientific

method, working in the domain of history, philology, and archeology, has become so formidable to the dogmatic theologian, what may not be said of the scientific method, working in the domain of physical science?"

To them M. Brunetière makes answer, not only in the article alluded to, but in others with which he followed it up in 1895, and 1896, that religious belief, far from disappearing, or being extinguished, by the "scientific method," is becoming recognized as the only basis of solution for the problem of man's social condition. In his interesting and able review of Mr. A. Balfour's book, "The Foundations of Belief" he says: "What is now discussed, is the question, whether *physically* or *physiologically* the necessity of belief, like the necessity of knowledge, must enter, in some part, into the very definition of man; whether *historically*, social evolution is conceivable without the supernatural, which has ever been mingled with it, as a guide and explanation; whether *morally*, it was ever possible to formulate a rule of conduct for men, which did not draw its sanction from the absolute."

He, thus, honestly forces on the attention of his scientific friends, the fact, that when men wish to analyze and account for humanity, from what point soever it may be looked

at, the "scientific method" is felt to be insufficient, and that it is the religious method (to borrow the word) which must be relied on. M. Brunetière ranges himself on this side, and freely admits that it is as foolish, as it is futile, to banish the supernatural from the discussion of the grave problems of life. He is especially strong on the impotence of reason, as the only guide and sole source of knowledge, and just as feeble as reason, science, its hand-maid, has also proved to be. Science, he asserts, has no answer to give to the various social problems, which occupy present-day thought so prominently; on that account men are beginning to turn aside from it, disappointed and dissatisfied, to seek an answer somewhere else. Science has been weighed in the balance of practical-knowledge, and found wanting.

This, in substance, is the conclusion of M. Brunetière, and thus he bears witness, that a real reaction has set in against science as pursued by unbelievers. This writer is a power in the French world of letters. Unless his place were among the foremost writers of France, he would not be a member of her famous Academy. It is easy, then, to imagine the dismay of his fellow-agnostics, at such an avowal on his part. Some of them called it the "great

betrayal." It was not that. It was only the honest admission of his own return to sound sense, in which he showed a great courage in support of convictions unpopular with his friends. It is a striking sign of the times.

But in the world of English letters there is another sign just as striking. At the time that M. Brunetière was confessing his failure of faith in the "scientific method," another mind, not less trained and brilliant than his, was engaged on the same line of thought in England. Not long after the Frenchman's declaration of the "successive bankruptcies of science" in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Mr. Balfour's thoughtful book "*The Foundations of Belief*" fell, as a surprise, on the world of London. It created a profound sensation. That so busy a man, as the Leader of the Commons, could find time for the lengthy and deep meditations, of which this book is the evidence and expression, was astonishing enough. But that one, whom high questions of State are supposed to absorb, and whom the little spiritualizing pursuit of politics chains to utterly worldly things, should be discovered devoting a large share of attention to the supernatural and the eternal questions, was a shock to the worldly-minded and a scandal to "advanced" thinkers of every

hue. What gave special cause for uneasiness, was the great literary power and charm displayed in the book. It would scarce be possible to treat in a finer and less fatiguing vein, those grave questions, which other writers of ability too often envelop in metaphysical and unrefreshing obscurity. There is a great variety in it, there is novelty of view and originality. There is an easy and confidential tone — though lady-readers, if it find any, may resent the bit on bonnets, as decidedly rash for so confirmed a bachelor as Mr. Balfour. But you will remark, besides, a grave earnestness in it, which makes you feel that the author was under the stress of the *liberare animam meam*.

The whole drift of the book is, manifestly, a reaction against science of the dogmatizing kind. It is a plea for faith, and a convincing call to reinstate the supernatural in its own place as a source of certitude and knowledge. Twenty years ago, the author, probably, would not have had the courage to publish it, and if he had, he would just as probably have got no hearing on the subject. His first book bore the less open title of "*Philosophic Doubt*." But the present one — a manifest invitation to believe — was the fashion of the day and the book of the season.

This may be owing, in some measure, to the high place attained by the writer in the world of politics, but it is owing just as much to the fact that men's minds were prepared for it, and were feeling a want they find there, in part, supplied. It shows that thousands of others are thinking the same thoughts that Mr. Balfour has, so ably and so interestingly, put into words.

It is important to note, that a demand was at once made for a French translation of this book, and as a coincidence it is interesting to learn, that M. Brunetière was asked to write its French preface. This shows how instinctively and quickly was recognized the identity of view between these two distinguished men, on the grave step of a return to religious thought — men who probably had never seen each other, lived in different countries, and had nothing in common, save their previous free-thinking tendencies. This is surely striking evidence of a reaction.

In my book, "*Disunion and Reunion*" I incurred no little criticism, and even ridicule, for the statement that Scotch people would yet wield an influence over English thought in the direction of the old faith. Mr. Balfour is a Scotchman!

M. Jules Payot, another of the French

libres-penseurs, in a book called "*De la Croyance*," enters his protest, also, against the shortcomings of science. Among other severe things he says: "My science does not hinder my ignorance of realities from being absolute; science has a symbolic language and an admirable system of signs, but the more it progresses, the farther it gets from the reality of things, and plunges into abstractions."

Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his book, "*Social Evolution*," which has attained a wide and just popularity, also strongly expresses the same feeling of disappointment with the scientific method, and its exiguous results. This book of Mr. Kidd's has also had the honor of a French translation. This translation was made by M. Le Monier, and published by the firm of Guillaumin of Paris. This would seem to indicate a demand in France, just now, for a literature widely different from that of the old school of irreligious scoffers and incredulous philosophers.

There is scarcely any Review in Europe, or for that matter in all the world, which commands a greater influence among the literary public than the Paris *Revue des Deux Mondes*. So many of its contributors have, from time to time, been elected to the high honor of membership in the *Academie*

Francaise, that it has aptly been called the vestibule of that famous Olympia. Under the rule of its founder Mr. Buloz, it was unfortunately the happy hunting-ground of the most aggressive anti-religionists. It was through its pages M. Rénan first found an audience, and, for a long time, it remained merely the organ for agnostic free-thought. But of late it has come to its readers as a surprise to notice how it has been steadily veering round to the orthodox compass-point of religious thought.

Time was when this Review would not have published the following story of Count Cavour's end — even though written by the Count Benedetti: "In a lucid hour of his last illness Cavour sent for his servant — 'Martin,' said he, 'we must part. Send in time for Padre Jacobo, the parish priest of the Madonna dei Angeli; he promised to assist me in my last hour.' This priest was sent for and spent a half hour, hearing his confession. This he (Count Cavour) afterwards told to his friend Farini: 'My niece,' he said, 'has brought Father Jacobo to see me, for you know I must prepare for the great step into eternity. I have made my confession, later on I shall receive communion. I want all to know, especially I want the good people of Turin to know, that I die a Christian.' "

What! Cavour sent for a Catholic priest and asked for the sacraments of the church? What a scandal to the free-thinkers and his fellow free-masons! Cavour, the noble radical — the unrivaled statesman, whose powerful mind swayed the councils of Europe, who was years ahead of his great coeval Bismarck in statecraft — the untiring worker for Italia Unita — the intriguer with the Carbonari and that plebeian bandit Garibaldi — the sworn foe of the Pope, and the beloved of all devout Protestants — he sending for a priest and dying an avowed Catholic — this should not have been made known, it is such a bad example to the atheistically enlightened! Yet it is in the pages of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for October, 1896, that this piece of history is given, vouched for by the distinguished Ambassador who knew him well.

In the same pages too, has appeared far the best appreciation of the life and work of the late Cardinal Manning, from the pen of a Protestant gentleman, M. Francis de Pressensé. When his able and sympathetic articles were published afterwards as a book it was "crowned" by the French Academy.

In this Review a writer of great and versatile talent, with the liquid Bohemian name of Wyzewa, is also permitted to give

a remarkable criticism of that stupendous work (in eight hundred and sixty-five parts) of the artist M. Tissot. The opening words of his critique are so much to the purpose of this chapter, that I may be pardoned for quoting them at some length in translation: "Every one has heard of that beautiful and good princess, who after long years of perfect wedded bliss was brought back by her husband and left in the wild woods where he first found her. Her only fault — truly a rare one — was that she was too good and too beautiful — at least so says the story. But I fancy, that born as she was in a wood, and knowing nothing but love, many little rustic traits helped to detach from her the princely husband's affections. Perchance he bethought him that she once tended sheep and was of rather low birth, or perhaps as he grew older he acquired new tastes and fresh desires, her natural disapproval of which he could ill brook. All we know is that he treated her most shamefully; but hardly had he again consigned her to her native woods than he was seen to run about the world in the most light-hearted manner looking for a more amiable princess and one worthier of being the wife of a prince like him, than the poor, discarded first love. He soon discovered, however, that the princess he had put away

was the best of them all ; for none of those he subsequently encountered could bestow upon him the happiness he sought. So after saying to himself twenty times over — no doubt through pride or may be weakness — that he never, never would recall her from exile, still finding that he could neither live nor die without her, he one fine day set out to look for her again. The legend adds that it was even a great happiness to him to have succeeded in finding her, and though she would have preferred his return grounded on more tender reasons, such as deep regret for his treatment of her and not merely because he felt the want of her, she nevertheless, touched by his misery, forgot and forgave. This is the only point where this naive story falls short in perfect likeness to another story that is *just now passing under our eyes*. There is not one of the adventures of this prince that we can not compare to our own adventures, since we banished from our heart (some fifty years ago) the old Christian faith that had been for so many centuries our trusted and faithful companion. . . . It had seemed to us too childish, we grew tired of it, it interfered too much with our inclinations and we too went about the world in search of a new worship. Our hearts grew young in the free air, and not a phantom rose before our

view but we decked it with all the graces. First we adored science. This is what Rénan recommended us to do in exchange for the faith he took from us. He set against the ‘unclean and puerile ideal,’ he professed to find in Christianity ‘the superior sanctity of the scientific ideal.’ Science alone, he said, was pure. But after forcing ourselves to love the substitute, it was far from giving us the moral support we used to get from Christianity. In fact we found it refused us everything, even the smallest grain of solid truth. Then, after how many other specters did we run and found them but phantoms that melted at our touch! Like the prince in the story we were now left alone, but just as little as he, were we able to bear our solitude. For doing or for dreaming — for living or dying we must have a faith. This is why some of us have taken courage, and have begun to deplore aloud the loss of the old faith.” A more earnest testimony than this to the present day reaction it would be hard indeed to find.

The popular reception given to M. Tissot’s marvelous artistic work in Paris, of which M. Wyzewa writes with such sympathy in the article from which the foregoing is taken, is another very striking sign of this

reaction. This great artist has devoted ten years of his life to the accomplishment of this one work — no other than the painted story of the life of Christ. He went out to Palestine, as he himself tells us, with the Gospel in his hand, and there studied on the spot all the places where that divine life was lived. The result of his work was exhibited at the *Salon* of the Champ-de-Mars in 1894. It forms a series of no less than eight hundred and sixty-five different studies.

It needed the courage of a great and sincere mind, thus to set once more before the eyes of the most frivolous population in the world, the entire life of our Savior. It was also a strange venture, at this late date, to handle again a subject exhausted by the labors of so many others. Had it not been treated a thousand times from every aspect and had not the worldly-minded long since turned weariedly away from it? Nothing could possibly be thought of less inviting to the mundane Parisians. Yet he never faltered, and to leave no mistake about his object, he appended to each painted scene an explanatory note of his own, which confessed his faith and evidenced the reverent spirit which prompted his work. His success was beyond all expectation. Seldom has such a reception been given to any

artistic work in our time. For three months, immense crowds invaded the galleries in the Champ-de-Mars. Surprise, respect, unstinted admiration were the tribute paid to this supreme effort of Christian genius, and an eminent art critic, not by any means of a pious turn himself, has declared, that it was impossible for any one who came there to leave without feeling the better for having come and seen. This splendid work seems like an inspiration. It was completed about the time that Ernest Rénan lay dying in Paris. He was the Arch-Arian of the nineteenth century. His cynical impudence in speaking of our Lord was never surpassed. He called him "that delicious young man from Galilee," and in another place "that delightful charlatan!" His treatment of the sacred life had destroyed all idea of Christ's divinity in thousands of minds. And now almost at the door of his dying chamber, a reviving elixir was administered to the faith he so powerfully strove to kill.

On the same lines, though in a different way, the distinguished Russian writer, Count Leo Tolstoi, has also been helping on the reaction. That a layman of wealth, high position, and scholarly attainments should

occupy himself in a serious and reverent spirit, editing a version of the Gospel, at this late hour of our era, is very disconcerting to the Huxleyan minds that have so long labored to discredit them. His book which bears the title simply of "The Gospels" was published in 1894 and in the following year was translated into French.

In the introduction he declares at once the motive of his writing, — "for me," he says, "there is nothing at all so important as this light which for eighteen hundred years has illuminated mankind." He excuses himself from all discussion as to the personality and history of Christ and he adds — "it is enough for me that His doctrine is the only one that gives meaning to my life."

It is also a significant fact, that in a very recent number of a secular American magazine the Viscount Melchoir de Vogué, a brilliant member of the French Academy, should announce to the public of the United States that, in his opinion, the greatest of living men is the present Pope. And this is not an *obiter dictum*, it is the thesis of the article and in proof of this rather bold assertion he alleges that the Pope, as "an enlightened guide in the supernatural unto his

fellow-man, has been of more practical use to them, and has afforded them more valuable help, than any of his contemporaries."

As a psychological puzzle, I am tempted to mention here a somewhat strange coincidence. While M. de Vogué was engaged on this serious and evidently sincere piece of work, which is also characterized by all the thoroughness of his great ability, he was at the same time, in another quarter, publishing a French story of a lubricious kind. This story bears the title of "*Jean d'Agrève*," and treats of a strange phase of illicit love. It may, perhaps, be pleaded in excuse, that the utter loathing created by the vivid picture drawn of his hero as a worthless, egotistic, self-pampered, uncleanly and sensual pagan coxcomb, and by the no less repulsive picture of the heroine, as an utterly sensual married woman, a mere animal in her sensuality, can not but influence people in favor of the higher and purer life—but he does not say so. That is a risky way to inculcate virtue.

CHAPTER III.

What Provoked the Protest.

I think it is clear from the foregoing, that the reaction against the scientists, of the anti-supernatural and anti-religious class, has commenced and most likely will continue. It will be helpful to that end, and not without interest to many readers, to explain why people are dissatisfied with the researches of the agnostic scientists.

The reason is short and intelligible — their conclusions bring no comfort, and are of no use to any human mind in answering the questions that are always present to men — whence have I come, why am I here, and what is to become of me?

For instance:

The last question, personally and vitally, affects everybody. There is no more certain fact, than that we shall not be very long in existence here. What is going to happen then? Every individual human being wants to know something definite about that. The universal fact of death makes it so personally interesting to each and every one. Well, when the "scientific method" and its conclusions are eagerly scrutinized for information on this point of

such intense interest, people are amazed to find, after all the parade made of them in these recent years, that they are dumb on this vital question. The utmost the honest scientists say is — We do not know. Some less scrupulous say — There is nothing to follow or to happen. But that is not honest for they give no proof — not the shadow of a proof of their assertion.

The former, indeed, advise every one not to trouble about it—to let themselves go with the great tide of human life into the void — the unknown. There is nothing to fear, no cause for alarm. Now the great mass of men never have believed, and never will believe that. It is no wonder their disappointment is great. An apt pupil of the “scientific method” in her “Story of an African Farm” declares, rather helplessly, that “the tears of the mourners and the mud of the grave cement the power of the priests!” Rather halting logic in our friend. One would think, it was the priests invented death. They, poor men, have got to face the muddy grave as well as other people, and are quite as much interested as to what is to become of them, as everybody else, but they are not at all likely to be so daring or reckless, as to lend themselves to deceptions about a matter, that involves their own outlook and well-being in com-

mon with all others. This is a specimen of prejudice-raising, which begets that daring attitude in some, but which happily does not satisfy the multitude.

But though the "scientific method" has nothing to tell about the mysterious future after death, it has a great deal to say about our origin.

On this ground, science is much more at home and very confident. For, unlike the future, the past at all events is real and explorable, and science claims it as its own peculiar province for research. For the last forty years, lakes of ink and reams of paper have been expended on reports by the scientist of their independent search across the ages for the first vital spark. To prosecute their researches, quite unshackled by any preconceived notions, they abolished and wiped out all previous maps and charts, which used to serve humanity as a guide over the distant and difficult country of its past. These maps and charts they declared to be utterly useless and misleading, and were accountable for all the myths and superstitions about the origin of mankind, which had so long degraded the human mind. They would undertake this exploration anew, with com-

mon sense and enlightened reason aided by the modern scientific method, as sole guides. They would tramp every inch of that ground to its utmost limits for themselves, taking nothing from hearsay or tradition. They would strip it of all its mysteries and bogeys, and bring back but the plain, simple answers that honest nature had to give. So they began, and ever since they have led the world a lengthening and weary walk through the domain of time.

At first the way was pleasant and interesting enough. It lay through the zoölogical department of the earth. Here as long as the study was confined to comparative anatomy—the bone-structure of the various animal families, their similarities and dissimilarities, it was curious and not uninteresting. Years of patient skill and labor were devoted to this. To most people, the motive of this minute curiosity about the formation of the animal world, would have been to admire the skill of the original designer of those marvelous structures (in which man had nothing whatever to do), and be lost in wonder at the resources of his great power. But the scientists never stopped to call attention to that. *Their* object was to find out what man really was and how he came to be.

After more years of patient and minute

study of animal structure, a deliberate and definite pronouncement was at length made on the subject. Everybody now knows what this pronouncement was, and with what mingled feelings it was received by the world when first put forth by Mr. Darwin. As the result of his long studies he declared, that man was not always as he is, that he did not enjoy, as was hitherto supposed, a distinct and different creation from the animals, that he passed through other forms before he attained his present shape, and in a process which he called by the now famous word *evolution*, man was shown to have "descended" from the brute creation. He even specified the immediate ancestor from which, as far as his studies then warranted him to say, he was gradually evolved in the animal world. Many think Mr. Darwin made a fatal mistake in thus particularizing, for it was then the world laughed irreverently, and theories that move to laughter lose all their dignity. Though he clothed his announcement in grave words of learned sound — namely, that our dear ancestor was *quadrumanous*, "arboreal in his habits" and *probably* (a concession, as he was now to speak more plainly), "furnished with a tail;" the facetious world caught the meaning at once — "oh, we are descended from monkeys — *et solvuntur risu!* That

was a severe check to the new biological science and a poor reward for such long and arduous labors.

But Mr. Darwin was quite serious, and abated nothing in his arguments and his assertions. His co-workers and followers stood by him, and proclaimed his discovery a triumph. But their investigations were not going to end with our "quadrumanous" friend, who was given to climbing trees and was "probably furnished with a tail."

Arrived at this stage of man's existence, the free investigators were only now, so to speak, securely on the scent. They had yet to arrive at the more elementary conditions of his earthly life. So, for many more years, they wandered back through the wastes of time. They searched the rocks for fossils. They explored the caves, and trawled the bed of the sea for specimens of life. They waded through swamps and quagmires, and fished for tadpoles and mud-fish. Then at last came the announcement that the utmost limit of primal living forms had been reached. There in the "cells" of those minutest creatures lay the "fons et origo" of all terrestrial life. They named it *protoplastic matter*.

From the mud-fish through varied forms came all animals; and just the same as the rest, from the mud-fish, through the ape,

came mankind! Not long since, Mr. Darwin's fellow-scientists and pupils erected a statue to his memory in his native town of Shrewsbury, Shropshire, England — presumably in gratitude for his elevating discovery as to their descent. "Hey! a mad world, my masters."

Since Darwin's time, further investigations have been made about this protoplasmic matter. The scientists did not wish the world to suppose, that they knew nothing of its nature. They brought chemistry to bear on it. They took it into the laboratory, set out their crucibles, retorts, solvents and stills and worked out an analysis of this subtle substance — result; four gases, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon! By evolution, therefore, man, as we know him — "the thing to be demonstrated" of the scientists — was at one time a monkey, sometime previously — protoplasm, and prior to that, four gases! But the ordinary common sense of men will not be satisfied with these results. They do not account for man. They say nothing of his chief attributes. How is he, a thinking being, of great intelligence, capable of self-reflection, self-guidance and self-government? The agnostic scientists will not admit, that anything came to him from outside, as an endowment or the act of another being, their

sole reason for not doing so, being the questionably logical one, that they have found no evidence of any creative act or creating being. A negative reason like this does not satisfy, as long as they are unable to supply a positive one, and assign a definite cause for a visible, palpable, undeniable fact, namely, *intelligent life*. It will not do to merely inform mankind, that aboriginally they were four gases. They inevitably want to know how the four gases came to think, to reflect, to make thought rule action and account to themselves for their sensations.

So for the practical minded, all those researches of the scientists into the origin of man and the sources of life, are entirely unsatisfying. They have failed to indicate any intelligible or adequate cause for composite human life, such as we all know it to be. They are dumb before the universally interesting question, which will never cease to be asked, Whence are we?

One of the most influential of those scientists — the man who gave the name agnostic to the sect (by no means new), not long before his death, made the bold, and what seemed to him, the consoling statement that "Christianity was driven to its last ditch." With gratitude the Christian may thank the man for teaching him that word. That

question — whence are we — is a final and a fatal ditch for “science.” Further efforts, indeed, have been made to scramble out of it. Some relied on the theory of spontaneous generation, and elaborate experiments were patiently made to sustain it. But the leading scientists honestly admitted that this was not sustainable and, as is well known, is now totally abandoned by the scientific. This conception of life, or the living principle producing itself, involves a mystery as great as any in the revelation, which those scientists affect to discard. Yet it was an unconscious adaptation of the eternal begetting of the Word in the Godhead described by St. John. But to transfer what is, in the eternal and necessary being, to the contingent and transitory, is not in the rules of logic.

Others have since made a wilder, and bolder plunge, to get out of the difficulty. The appearance of initial life on this planet they say is easily explained by the fact, that the earth in its course through space encounters a lot of cosmic dust, which adheres to it, and thus, mingled with this dust, living germs of protoplasmic, thinking matter found a home on our globe. But this ingenious theory is as little final as the others, for where or when in cosmic space did this living protoplasm get its life, and how came

it to be endowed with the wonderful potentialities, of which the mental and physical faculties of men and women are the development? That will not do.

Thus the labors of unaided science have failed to give us any light on the question which so personally interests every living human being — Whence are we?

There is another question just as pressing, and more important to men, on which the independent scientists, according to their engagement, are bound to satisfy them — Why are we here at all?

Their investigation of this question — the *purpose* of human life — has not resulted in anything pleasanter and more encouraging for us than their dissertations on our origin.

In Mr. Darwin's books the "*Descent of Man*" and "*The Origin of Species*," as well as in the writings of those who follow and indorse him, all we learn is, that mankind has been cast into the mêlée of this world — to fight! to struggle for his very existence, and in that struggle to prove his fitness to live by "surviving."

I do not think it exaggeration to say, that this is absolutely all that can be learned from those bulky volumes on the vital question — Why are men here at all?

When you come to extract from those books any practical or serviceable meaning or conclusions, the only wonderful thing left you to admire, is that men could write so much and say so little. But when their conclusion is arrived at, it is only vexation of spirit. Of what use or comfort is it to humanity to be told, that there is a compelling and invariable law of struggle in animated nature, in which the weak must always go down before the strong—the ill-suited yield to the “fittest.” For whose particular amusement this rather savage game was invented, or to what use the survivors were to put their “survival,” these writers do not seem to have any sort of care. Why, a prize-ring has more meaning than the theater of human life, in their view. Not to seem entirely barren, however, in their speculations, those ignorers of a divine purpose apply evolution to man in his “survived” stage. He is not by any means done with evolution after merely surviving. That is a slow, majestic, if despotic, process, which is never more to let go its grip. Formed into society as a survived species, man must go on evolving, constantly tending to a state of greater perfectability and so *ad infinitum*. That may be all very well for the individuals of the race who may reach that end, but what

about those who have passed off the scene, those who are passing now, and who will daily pass off through "death's cruel gate," before tasting the delights of this vague perfectability of the scientists. Truly a vexation of spirit. And that is all they have to say. And if asked whether the deeds, done in the days of his surviving, have any bearing personally and as an individual on man's condition after he dies, or what is to become of him then — they say, "Oh, we are agnostics; you must not ask us anything about these mysterious things; we do not know, for science has *told* us we can not know anything about them. Science has not discovered any intelligent Creator, nor any meaning in life, beyond a struggle for existence, never came across such a thing as a soul, nor discovered any trace of any other existence or world for man but this." This is the last word of science, so turn down the lights, the lecture is over, and the audience is left groping and bumping against each other in the dark.

These unsatisfying results of agnostic science have provoked the protest of which we saw the clear indications in the preceding chapter, and most people will allow that it was time, for the credit of common sense, to protest.

CHAPTER IV.

Agnostic Socialism.

The frequent failure of the "scientific method" applied to the condition of life, is another reason for the reaction. The scientific method of course makes a *tabula rasa* of all previous religious traditions. Religion, that is, a knowledge of supernatural things and their relation to us, science has declared unproven. It is, therefore, to be set aside, and not taken into account, in the problems of man's conduct and existence.

When men, then, in our time, came to think, on account of the great inequality of fortune and increase of want, that society should be reconstructed, or at least readjusted — many schemes were proposed for this end. Most of them proceeded on agnostic lines, that is, were purely materialist and secular, and omitted all calculation on man's spiritual nature, its demands, its defects and its aspirations. A fair type of these proposals is to be found in Mr. Bellamy's book, "*Looking Backward*." He did well to lay the scene of it in the year 2000, when none of his readers will be there to enjoy the delightful happiness of his reconstructed society. However, we have the advantage of

having witnessed some experiments in this reconstruction so brilliantly depicted *on paper*. It will be interesting and conclusive to give the story of a few of them.

In 1894, in the city of Brisbane, Queensland, a lame printer, named Lane, assumed a mission to his fellow-trademen and laborers, inviting their co-operation for a new social scheme. He had long been known as a labor organizer, and a leader in the unions. But nearly all the strikes he had engaged in, and helped on so actively, had ended badly in the long run for the workers.

This led him to think it was impossible to improve the social conditions of the workingman, while surrounded by the class prejudices and the adverse influences of the wealthy in society as at present constituted. Suppose they could be moved away from those surroundings and, putting oceans between them and those irritating, stupid class divisions, and given a chance to found society anew on the lines laid down by the clever theorists he had long studied and admired, there was no reason why they should not succeed.

It was a poor compliment to the Queensland government, whose legislation in favor of the workingman had for some time been notorious, and by some people deemed far

too socialist and radical. But it failed to satisfy the aspirations of Mr. Lane and his friends. He drew up an outline of his project, and addressed it not only to the workmen of Queensland, but also to the workmen of all the Australian colonies. As many as could contribute a little to a common fund necessary to start them (I think it was £60), were invited to come away to Paraguay in South America, and found a New Australia. Nor was this a step in the dark, for Lane had been in communication with Paraguayan authorities who, anxious for immigration and too poor to pay for it, like its richer neighbors of the Argentina, welcomed his proposals and offered grants of land in the interior. This was a great inducement, but a greater was the perfect freedom they were to enjoy. No clergyman or preacher of any kind was to be allowed to join. They were to have no church or profess any religion. No lawyers were to come — they should have no courts nor police. Community of interests, and as much as possible community of goods, was to secure agreement and exclusion of all class distinction, and guarantee good fellowship and happiness. Well-ordered industry, without the slavery and stigma of labor, would insure prosperity without the unnecessary abundance which

had bred the luxury and idleness so corrupting and baneful to the old society.

Hundreds of applications poured in. The money was freely deposited. Lane chartered a large sailing vessel and had her laden (in Sydney harbor) with provisions and implements requisite for pioneering. So numerous had been the applications that all could not be accommodated on the first voyage. A selection of about 300 was made, and in due time with a great flourish from the labor world, and an ovation from the unemployed, in which Sydney seems always to abound, they set sail for their New Australia beyond the wide Pacific.

It is a weary way round the Horn to the La Plata, and from the banks of that famous river to the site of the New Australia it is a long trek, as they say in Africa. So those of us, who felt an interest in watching the result of this extraordinary modern socialist experiment, had to possess our souls in patience when the good ship was lost to view. It was undoubtedly a remarkable event in our times, and full of interest for every one who gave a thought to the great social problem. Those men had gone out to teach the world a realistic lesson in building up the proper kind of human society. They would put to a practical test the favorite paper social theories that of

late had got such wide circulation. The world had reason to feel obliged to them. A valuable wisdom was to be learned from the result.

Nearly a year went before we had any tidings. Lane's first report of things was favorable enough. All had arrived in safety. The Paraguayan Government had been as good as its word and besides had been very helpful. There was just a hint that great difficulties had to be overcome, there were many things which could not be foreseen nor provided for beforehand. Still it was too soon to be either too sanguine or discouraged. Meanwhile he recommended that the applicants, who could not be accommodated on the first trip, should now be forwarded with fresh supplies, and he promised that the newcomers should find everything in good shape and should not have to contend with the discomforts of first settlement.

(By the way, the lands of one of the old Jesuit missions once so famous and flourishing in that distant land had been assigned them.) On this report two hundred more, if I rightly remember, set out on the second expedition.

They were not very long gone, when a rumor from another source reached the Sydney press that things were not going

smoothly in Lane's Utopia, with a caution to other intending emigrants to await further developments. This caused some uneasiness, and the news of the arrival of the vessel in the Plata was anxiously looked for. It came. At Monte Video the new emigrants were surprised to find some members of the first expedition waiting for them. No, they had not come to greet them and show them the way — they were waiting for a chance to get back! Alas! poor humanity; it was the old story — disagreements, disputes, jealousies, schism. The thing was not working, they said, and was not going to work. Lane was a dictator. They fancied they had come out to be rid of that kind of thing, but they were deceived, and so on.

Having come so far and the complainants being comparatively few, the second batch continued on their way to see for themselves.

There was silence again for another interval on the subject in Sydney. Then more rumors found their way into the papers from time to time. Now it was an interview with a returned New Australian, again it was a defense from Lane and explanations from his friends, then recriminations until people did not know what to think. After a while came a consular report that distress

was prevailing among the immigrants ; that many had found their way to the coast, were destitute among a people whose language was not theirs, and were begging passages home in English ships !

Last scene in this eventful history : A member of the New South Wales Parliament unfolded to the House so dismal a story of the plight in which these New Australians found themselves, so far away in a foreign land, that a motion for their relief was generously carried, and measures were sanctioned to facilitate their return home. So ended this scheme to reconstruct society on the scientific method of ignoring all knowledge of man's first beginning or last end. The promoters forgot one all-important matter, that whoever would reconstruct society, where it needs reconstruction, should first reconstruct *human nature*. And science has nothing to say about that.

The second case is still more instructive, for this second attempt at solving the social trouble, was backed by all the resources of well-ordered government and legislative authority. It had none of the drawbacks of emigration nor the heart-breaks of dis-

tant exile. It was carried out comfortably at home.

There is no place in the world where secular socialism, that is, a socialism without any reference to God, man's relation to his will or laws, conscience or any supernatural consideration whatsoever, has had so fair a field or so much in its favor as in the Australian Colonies. Universal suffrage, which, in one of them at least, includes women, has given the making of the laws into the hands of the so-called common people, because in a new country the common people are for a long time in the immense majority. The policy of the governors sent from England is, as far as I have seen, not to interfere with any domestic legislative arrangements which the colonists see fit to make. This legislation, notably in Queensland, South Australia and New Zealand, is inspired by all the modern secularist social doctrines. Equalization of wealth, leveling class distinctions, expropriation of large landholders, the land for the people, resumption by government of public conveyance, telegraphic and telephonic service (an immense source of patronage) public funds to be advanced to the people for private enterprise, chiefly agricultural however, easy marriage laws and facilities for divorce, free, secular, and compulsory edu-

cation, perfect independence in voting, no privilege on account of class or calling, accorded by the State — such is the programme. Surely never before had the “people” such a chance to realize their dreams of prosperity and social happiness. Let us see how much of that they have attained. Ten years ought to yield results enough to judge by, and that is about the time the Legislatures have been cleared of the old conservative, exclusive and aristocratic control. I shall take the Colony with which I am best acquainted — New Zealand. In 1896 there were more prisoners in the immense jails of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin than in 1886. The four large asylums for the insane were overcrowded in 1896, the smallest accommodating five or six hundred patients. In 1893, the most dangerous and damaging labor strikes brought trade almost to a standstill, and caused much privation and suffering. These few facts speak for themselves. Popular legislation, so far, left humanity pretty much as it found it, perhaps a trifle worse. Yet “labor members” were numerous in the legislative Assembly; into the Council or *Upper House* were introduced four journeymen, a boiler-maker, a printer, a compositor and a joiner, while among the Ministers, the real rulers

of the country, were an ex-pedler and examiner and "pub" proprietor (these two became Prime Ministers) and ex-grocer and a telegraph clerk!

Their greatest experiment in social equality and an approach to orderly communism was the founding of *Village Settlements*. This scheme originated in New Zealand and was adopted later in some of the Australian Colonies. It was a plain attempt to give reality to Mr. Bellamy's prophetic visions and therefore interesting to follow its fortunes.

The chief features of the scheme were these:—

Associations were to be formed consisting of not less than twenty persons.

To each member of the association the government would allot sixty-four acres of land and a money loan of fifty pounds to be repaid at five pounds a year for ten years. Five pounds an acre should be spent each year on improvements. Every association was to be directed by a board of three trustees, elected by the villagers from their own body. No member should have any private or separate interest in the land, save the possession and use of that portion allotted to him by the Trustees.

The rules of living and work were very minute. They provided for the kind of members to be admitted.

Women were eligible. Asiatics were not. No member was to be admitted without the sanction of the board. The board had power to expel members for disobedience to rule, or absence from work without leave. An appeal lay from the board's decisions to the body of the members, who decided by vote — a bare majority sufficing. The board resumed possession of the rights of the expelled, and even of the deceased, reallocoting the property for the benefit of the community. The board was elected for one year, and was eligible for re-election. The board's powers were very extensive. They were what Fourier, that patriarch of Socialism in France, three-quarters of a century ago, imagined they ought to be. Probably the promoters of that Parliamentary Bill at the antipodes, had made acquaintance with the views of that fertile dreamer. The board was charged with the responsibility of the villagers to the government. They regulated the work to be performed, assigned to each one his task and prescribed the hours. The board managed the co-operative stores, and fixed the payment-in-kind to be made to each family — money currency was to be dispensed with. The functions of mayor, corporation and magistrate were discharged by the board and they were besides consti-

tuted inspectors of domestic arrangements and guardians of the general welfare — in fact such a *Pooh-Bah* was never seen as this board of the Village Settlement.

As regards the earnings, it was arranged that two-thirds were to be distributed as dividends, the other third reserved for interest and improvements. Any one incapacitated from work, without fault, would continue to participate to the full share in results.

The villagers were to show deference and respect to the members of the board. Residence was compulsory. All absences should be duly authorized, save a half-month's holiday in the year, which was a right. No buying or selling was to be permitted in the settlement without the knowledge and sanction of the board. If the board ordered the profits made by any individual whether within or without the association to be paid into the common fund, it should be done. All tools and implements were to be looked on as the property of the community. All were to consider themselves as possessing only the use of the land and not proprietors or farmers in the old sense. Every Friday dockets or coupons were to be distributed to each family entitling the bearer to supplies of all kinds at the stores. Finally, the legal

dissolution of the association could be declared by the "general assembly" of all the members — but not before the State was safe-guarded in all its outlay and all debts paid.

Such were the Village Settlements in New Zealand and other Antipodean regions — praiseworthy effort no doubt to advance the well-being of the people. It is sad to relate they have all been dismal failures, and the reason is not far to seek.

It would be very blamable to make it a reproach to the promoters who now wield the political power, that they once were peddlers, publicans or petty clerks. But it is a reproach to these men, that they gave the bad example to the people they professed to serve, of discarding all religion from their own lives and excluding all consideration of its restraining influences over men, from their management of public affairs. A late workingman Prime Minister in New Zealand, was once notorious as a lecturer on the atheistic platform and when he came to die — cut off in his prime — the whole country knew that to the end he was true to his principles and false to his God. He was buried with civil rites. In those days when that two-handed fallacy and most fallacious of shibboleths — *liberty of conscience* — is bandied about. it may be

said that no one should find fault with a man's opinions or professions. But in the ordinances of God and in the matter of obedience to His will who can honestly pretend there is liberty of "conscience" or conduct for anybody? And if men assume that there is no God to be taken into account, nor any rules laid down by Him for human conduct, the logic of facts quickly refutes their assumption. The failure of agnostic Socialist schemes such as the Colonial Village Settlements demonstrates that unless men feel themselves answerable to a higher and greater power than their fellow-men, and amenable to a Judge whose reprimand and award reach far beyond this life, they never will be capable of the self-sacrifice, self-restraint and self-denial absolutely necessary for living or laboring together with any approach to peace and concord.

So after but a few years of trial, most of those Village Settlements have broken up. Quarrels and bickerings, in some cases accompanied by assault and violence, were reported from all sides until the governments are pretty sick of their experiments.

In South Australia towards the end of 1895 it became necessary to institute a parliamentary inquiry into the state of those Village Settlements. Thirteen such associa-

tions had been there established but two years before. The evidence given before the committee was deplorable and conclusive. The settlers were found to have fallen into debt all round, to the government, to merchants, to the banks. The Board charged settlers with idleness and incapacity, the settlers charged the Board with despotism. In some of the villages with not more than two hundred or three hundred inhabitants, distinct parties had already been formed, as inveterate in opposition as any Tory to Whig or Radical to Liberal-Unionist. Alas! poor humanity. Another strange feature appeared. Nearly all the settlers, before they entered the association, were ardent disciples of the lectures under the "red flag" and readers of the abounding communistic press. The Village Settlement was the beau ideal of these theorists — the practical reality of their doctrines. A short trial brought a rude undeceiving. One man was heard to declare that for years he had been an advocate of "the land for the people" — but now he preferred to believe in "the land for Tom O'Grady" without "the people." Another had been eager to live where every one was to be a brother and sister, but now he thought it more peaceable to be a friendless orphan, and so on. They all agreed

that somehow the thing would not work, nor was it ever likely to work, in the way laid down for them.

I have dwelt on these somewhat dry details but not without a purpose, because I mean to show presently, how in contrast to the scientific method, these same conditions of common life are actually being fulfilled under our very eyes, if we would only use them to see, and have actually been successfully fulfilled for centuries, under the religious method and by force of the supernatural motive.

But before entering upon that, as it is a matter of present public interest, I wish here to notice the still broader and bolder experiment in the "land question" which these same socialist and agnostic legislators of the Antipodes have entered upon. In 1894 the New Zealand ministry began a trial of that Land Nationalization scheme advocated by Mr. Henry George, of which the world has heard so much talk of late.

They passed a "perpetual lease" bill by which land in New Zealand shall henceforth be held by tenant-occupiers only, the State possessing the fee-simple and becoming the grand landlord of all the country by degrees.

The "limitations of holdings" was another important measure. It provided that for the future no one person shall acquire more than four hundred acres of purely agricultural land, or more than eight hundred acres of land part agricultural, part pastoral, or more than two thousand acres of purely pastoral land. This measure is a step, nay, a stride, towards the equal partition of the land among the people and aimed at the "squatter" or large station-owning class. The last election, 1896, was looked on as the most important ever held in New Zealand, because during this term of office, immense tracts of Crown lands will fall into the hands of the government which were formerly leased, under "squatter" ascendancy, at the merest nominal rent to large pastoralists in addition to what they had already purchased, at a cheap figure also. It was therefore of immense interest to the large station-owners, that they should have a voice in deciding whether those old leases should be renewed or not, while it was perfectly well known that if the promoters of the new land laws — the party then in power — got in again, those leases would most certainly not be renewed. It may be imagined how eagerly both sides prepared for the fight. It was the last great effort of

the Conservative party, which for some time has been in a hopeless minority. Like the Tories in England who fell back on the rump of the dissident Liberals and became Liberal-Unionists in order to remain in power, the Conservatives were ready to ally themselves with any old party that would give them a chance of a majority. They adopted the platform of the liquor Prohibitionists — with somewhat wry faces it may be supposed. They also gained some strength from those, and they were many, whose confidence was shaken by some recent financial blundering of the popular party's ministry. But to no avail. They were defeated at the polls, and those important expiring leases are at the discretion of the land nationalizers.

But it was not alone for renewed leases the large land-holders were fighting, it was for their very existence, for there was yet another land measure passed by the Popular party which affected them most seriously. It was the "progressive land tax" bill, which provides that taxes shall go on increasing in heavier and heavier ratio on every thousand acres of pastoral land above the prescribed number of acres. It is another way of expropriating the big land-owners. Coming, together with the large outlay necessitated by the rabbit-pest, it

has made large station owning a losing and ruinous occupation. Some proprietors have already sold out to the government, the only available customer, and all would be willing to do so and leave the country if they could. Thus the workingman's government will be ultimately free to parcel out the land among the workingmen. The outcome of this very courageous legislation cannot of course be fully foreseen, for it is only the next generation will be witness of final results. But one experiment already made by the government, with an estate purchased from dissatisfied owners, does not augur fair things for their further ventures in the future. It is now widely rumored that the government has not found the State farmers of this *Cheviot Estate* any less troublesome, more honest or happier than the village settlers. The truth is, those new legislative reformers of humanity are attempting the impossible task of promoting the contentment and happiness of men, without improving that human nature from which all their miseries spring. The genius of the "scientific method," which entirely ignores the cultivation and correction of that human nature, is deluding these obstinate but well-meaning politicians of agnostic socialism. A whole generation has now issued from the

free and secular schools founded also by them. And what result can be looked for from pupils, who never once, within their walls, had heard inculcated the only effective principle of moral restraint and self-control, nor ever heard mentioned the name or existence of the supreme Arbiter of human conduct? In some schools indeed such things have been mentioned — only however to be sneered at by the atheist teachers, of whom there are a very large number in these State schools. The evidences accumulating from every side of perverse and vicious conduct, demonstrate the utter inability of those purely secular experiments in Socialism, to meet the aspirations of humanity for a more tolerable mundane existence. No wonder people are beginning to clamor for some more successful solution.

It will be well worth while then, in the next chapter, to show that this very socialism and communism so much advocated in these latter days, and so often abortively attempted by some men, are not only not impossible and unattainable, but have for centuries been realized and actually exist, with the happiest results in the world of to-day.

CHAPTER V.

Instances of Real Socialism.

There is in the world at this present moment a body of men, numbering roughly some twelve thousand associates. They are drawn, in most part, from the poorer classes. They are strangers to each other in the sense that they come not from the same place or even from the same country—they are of many nations. There is no distinction of rank or class among them, save what good order requires. The places of authority are filled by election and, in the minor trusts, by appointment. All, whether in authority or not, are equal before the general regulations or rule of life. They possess property, places of abode and means of subsistence, but everything is *in common*. No individual possesses anything in his own right, yet all have the use of what is owned. They may inherit from relatives and others as individuals, but such inheritance may be used only for some good purpose and by permission. They can, however, will it back to whom they please outside their own body. They work, not as they please, but only as work is assigned them. The main employ-

ment is of one kind, they teach, mostly the poor. They teach too those who can pay, to be able to teach more of the poor who can not. They also instruct the ignorant of the adult working classes. After that, they do all their own domestic work. Beyond the marketing and cooking and cleaning up, that is very little, each one in his private life being his own servant. They are ready, however, at all times, for any deed of neighborly benevolence that may lie at their hands to do. They have joined the ambulances in time of war. They have their own times for relaxation and moderate enjoyment, but the pleasures which the world pursues, with so much zest and cost, concern them not. They are never permitted to be unoccupied. Their day is of seventeen hours and minutely regulated. Their night is of seven hours from 9 P. M. to 4 A. M. or 10 P. M. to 5 A. M. in some climates. They are not lovers of the soft life. They live together in groups and call each other "brothers." They are interchangeable from group to group, and though they are scattered widely through the world, all follow one and the same rule and obey one voice. At stated times they hold general assemblies, each house electing a representative delegate. They have thus existed for over two hundred years.

They join young, live long, and die in the ranks. They renew the dead by ever increasing volunteers. In sickness and old age they receive a constant and tender care. They must needs like this life, and must deem it happiest and best for them, to abide in it so long. This is a living and wonderful fact for all men to see.

Again, there is a body of women in the world to-day, numbering some fourteen thousand. They differ from the men, just alluded to, in that they are drawn from all classes of society, from families of wealth and title, down to the daughters of the poor. They differ too, in that their works have a range as wide as human wants. They tend leper hospitals, or smallpox patients, or yellow fever cases. They teach fashionable academies or instruct little dusky natives under tropical skies. They go under fire on the battle-field to aid the wounded, or into the slums of towns to dress the sores of the uncleanly sick, and charm away, by soothing words, the sullen despair of the suffering poor. They give lessons in painting, lectures on physical science, or preside at an organ. They cook like professional *chefs*, wash the pans and kettles, launder

and scrub the house. They train the workman's child to lacemaking and embroidery, short-hand, and typewriting, or take charge of a lunatic asylum or a female prison. They have open homes for the friendless young of their sex, and shelters, with a sister's welcome, for the fallen and unfortunate, — fourteen thousand of them, busy ever, at all these works all over the world! And all that work they do for nothing. There is no personal gain — they get no money for it, individually. There is no rank or division of class among them. The countess and the peasant work side by side. They wear the same costume — the same plain and rather coarse garb. You can scarce tell who is who, for all are trained to gentle manners, and when they want to spend a few pennies they often laugh together to find they have not got them. Though they have gone apart from their own kin to live with strangers, they have homes in common wherever they go and they call each other "sister," which they truly are to each other in will and deed. They rise at 4 o'clock at all seasons and in every climate, and there is scarcely a climate where they are not found, and they retire at 9 P. M. Through their long day, they agree to be busy, always busy. They agree to be cheerful too, to help others

through sorrow. Their government, or plan of management, is very simple but very perfect. They are all subject to one head, and that is a man. He is called the director. But he is not absolute or despotic. There are others to whom he is responsible, and he guides only by long-established rule. There is ample and full protection for the weakest and youngest among them. Brave and wonderful little army! Death claims them as other mortals, but their ranks never seem to thin. Human hearts beat beneath their blue serge robe—women's hearts, with all a woman's tenderness and yearnings—but disciplined. They, too, have their general assemblies now and again, and then it is wonderful to hear them tell the blended story of their world-wide experience; for the great human drama has been unfolded before them in the by-ways of life—the fierce passions at play, the hopes, the fears, the griefs, and joys of the human struggle—they have witnessed it all, and borne part in the action.

Among themselves they are republican simplicity and equality, and if one is given charge, as must needs be, she is obliged to call herself *the servant*, to obviate distressing airs, and keep her humble. For women are prone, perhaps more so than men, to

men's great weakness, which Shakespeare so finely censures —

“ Man, proud man,
Clothed in a little brief authority,
Doth play such tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep,”

or laugh perhaps would be better. They are guarded against that, and are not permitted to distress each other, or either amuse or grieve the angels. They choose never to call anything their own — they say *our* shoes, and if things get mixed in the washing they do not mind, provided they fit when they put them on. They sit at the same table and eat the same food, what one has, all have. What could be more perfect *communism* than this? Have you ever heard of *socialism* more complete? Nor is this a state of things they are merely experimenting on. Their association came into existence about the time that London was burning and was made desolate by its great plague. And for these two centuries and more, without dispute or quarrel, this same life has been lived by multitudes of those weak and gentle women. They must have found it good to live so. The stage of experiment is over long ago, and at this hour, there are some fourteen thousand who

live so still, and make no noise about it either.

There is yet another body existing in our time, who have gone apart from their kindred, to live a similar life in their own fashion. It is again, a body of men. I have lately seen it stated, that, at the present moment, they number about fifteen thousand. They differ from the former bodies, in that they are drawn from the aristocracy of talent. Except a minority of lay-associates, who do the lower order of work, but who yet enjoy to the full, equality of membership, and share in the common life; all the rest are gentlemen highly educated and accomplished. This element is admittedly the hardest to deal with in the matter of socialism, for "knowledge puffeth up," as a wise writer said long ago — and nothing puffs up like it. Yet three hundred and forty years have gone by, since they first came together, and without any friction from within, they have succeeded in merging self in the common number, and have lived in true fraternity, equality and that liberty they like best. No matter how much the general body gains in wealth, or acquires in property, it does not make any individual among them one doit or dime the richer.

No member wants or cares to own anything, not even the coat or hat he may be wearing, and were he asked to take them off, and let another have them, he would do so and receive others though inferior. There are no parties among them, nor any private enterprise or interest to be pursued. All yield themselves voluntarily to the strictest discipline, and each receives his orders what to do or where to go, even to the most distant place, without a murmur. They have common homes and a common table, and like the others only seven hours' rest. Their employments are very varied, but their main work is secondary and higher grade teaching — next to *having* knowledge, is the pleasure of imparting it, and the years are long that they devote to its acquisition. However there is this peculiarity in their institute. After the general and thorough training, to which all are submitted, has been completed, then great latitude is allowed to individual bent and tastes. One man has a taste for oratory — well, an orator let him be, and give him all the time, that the drudgery and toil of oratory require.

Another man likes astronomy — they build him an observatory, and stock it with instruments. They have three very famous observatories at present, at Rome,

Manila, and Havana. They will let their man go in charge of government astronomical expeditions. One died at the Cape in such employment not long ago.

Another man has a talent for writing — let him write by all means, and have every facility for publication. Or they found a monthly magazine and let him edit it.

Another loves teaching — they find him “a chair” and make him a life-long professor.

Another thinks he can manage the strange peoples of distant countries — they send him to China, Korea, and Japan.

Another has a tact for civilizing savages; they plant him among the very worst specimens to be found, in Northwest Australia and Borneo.

Another has the social gift, and will carry weight in society; they give him a good coat and let him dine out.

Another has a turn for the physical sciences — they build him a laboratory, supply him with chemicals and a microscope, and let him correspond with “learned societies.”

Thus the widest room is given to individuality, yet from one governing hand go out the threads of the wide network, that holds all in the unity of the common life. Whenever and from wheresoever they are called back, they come. Wherever sent.

they go. In declining years or strength they have a welcome home and a brother's care. When they die they make no will, they have nothing to leave, even their old clothes are not theirs. Did Marx or Blanc or F  urier or Bellamy or George or Wm. Morris ever formulate a more complete socialism or communism than that? The schemes that *these* men have sketched for us, remain mostly on paper. When tried, they break down. But this body is a living reality, an achievement, a success! Why is this? The answer is very simple. Those writers confine their view solely to this life, but the men and women I have described, work both for this life and the next, or rather work through this life, with a view to that they believe eternal.

The self-restraint, and the curbing of all self-seeking, necessary that men should live together in peace while pursuing a common end, find no motive strong enough to sustain them, in the mere temporal advantage of a little more security, or temporal happiness to be attained. This is a matter of fact. It has been proved by the failure of the trials essayed over and over again.

The socialist Village Settlements in the Australian Colonies, just described, are a notorious and very recent example. It is well known, that in other places groups of

people, wearied by the aimless frivolity of what is called society, and pained by the seemingly unjust inequalities of life, now and again, have gone apart to try the experiment of the common life on purely secular lines. The New England Brook Farm community (disciples of Fourierism and Margaret Fuller) were the wonder and the talk of the world for a brief season, and ended in the pitying smiles of many.

The biography of the late Lawrence Oliphant supplies another and very interesting instance, though the story is sad enough. Readers of his works can not fail to recognize his brilliant gifts of mind, and to admire the grace and fluency of a style, that entitles him to a high place among the writers of our century. Readers of his biography will wonder, that a man like him, born to good social position, attaining by his talents high rank in the diplomatic service of his country, eagerly bad for, and largely paid as a journalist, should have abandoned a career of such brilliant promise, and in unrest of soul, have sought the happier way of a higher and unworldly life. But to relinquish wealth and high position to brave public opinion, to bear the pitying comments of friends, above all to lead his young and accomplished life-partner into his venture, displays at least

the courage of sincerity. It all reads like some far-off, old religious romance, rather than a true story of real life from our worldliest of centuries.

But the strangest and saddest part of it is the singular choice he made of a guide to that hard and mystic way. This was a certain American, an ardent preacher of the higher life, and the better way. It is almost unaccountable, how a man of Oliphant's intelligence and worldly experience, should have fallen so easily under the influence of that person, who, as the sequel showed, was more of an adventurer, if not a mountebank, than a spiritual enthusiast. Yet so it was, even to the extent of utter self-abandonment. He and his young wife accompanied him to America, and having made over to him all their money, and even their personal effects, were put to work by him on his communistic farm. His despotism over them went the length, not only of imposing the rudest and most drudging toil upon those refined people, but of separating them, and forbidding them even to speak to each other. But their fortitude soon gave way, and they came out of this painful and humiliating experience, shattered in health and fortune, and survived it only a very few years.

On the other hand, the thousands of peo-

ple, banded together under similar conditions, in the three associations I have described, succeed and persevere unto the end, happy in their undertaking.

That description is no fancy sketch.

These associations are living facts visible before the world and have names. The first is an Order of French origin known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, commonly called in English "The Christian Brothers." The second, also of French foundation, is the congregation of the "Filles de la Charité" — the famous Sisters of Charity — those with the great, white, wing-like bonnets supposed to be adapted from the Picardy or Norman peasant head-dress of the seventeenth century. And the third is the celebrated Order whose members write the formidable S. J. after their names — Societas Jesu — Jesuits.

One of the moral wonders of the world is the Noviciate of the Sisters of Charity in the Rue du Bac, in Paris; touching on the wicked Latin quarter, the *seminaire*, as they call it, seminary, in spiritual botany, the nursery, where the seeds of piety in every variety are planted under cover, and its tender shoots sprout in warm shelter from passion's storms. If you are respectable, and get yourself authenticated you can have a peep. Under an old portico in

that rather dingy street, you enter one of the largest private properties in the heart of that great city. When I saw the Novices, it was on a procession day. They numbered, then, between five and six hundred. It was a wonderful sight. The bloom of youth was on them all — and beauty's bloom on many — the usual slender proportion of it, as in any crowd of the sex. They were dressed all alike — half cap, half old-fashioned bonnet — a fichu and plain black gown — like decent, cleanly, French country girls. They were of many nationalities — of all ranks. The neighboring, aristocratic Faubourg St. Germain, was even represented. It was delightful to hear that immense chorus of young voices in the hymns. What a holocaust to heaven in those young lives. They were here preparing, in innocence and purity of life, for the great renouncement. Out from that training cot, would go those carrier-doves of the Divine Compassion, to minister to all humanity's miseries. For two hundred years they have been going, into every clime, across many seas. They are going still, if indeed, they have not been evicted by those noble persecutors of all that is good, messieurs the municipal councillors of Paris.

A little farther down on the same "Rive

Gauche," near the "Invalides," you may see a similar, if not quite as picturesque a sight in the Noviciate of the Frères des Ecoles. It is certain they have been disturbed, drafted into the common barrack-room to serve their military term, by the votes of those "emancipators of the race" — the Republican deputies of modern France. There were not enough soldiers, without disturbing those devoted instructors of the poor! Will any one solve the mystery — why so many men and women are found to hate, storm, and rage against everything that is really pure and good? If any one doubts there is a devil, let him ponder that fact. Left and right of that river Seine, there is heaped up as much human defiance of God, and depravity, as could well cumber any given, equal space of this earth's surface. Wedged in between — "*les extremes se touchant*" — you have those *parterres* of virtue's finest flower, to stay the suspended sword of the Divine Avenger.

The Noviciates of the Great Society, S. J. are everywhere. There is one for each of its twenty or so of *Provinces*.

But these three orders, by no means exhaust the list of those who seek their happiness and welfare in the common life, even at the present day. I selected them as

types. They are not even as old, as some others which still exist. One has been thirteen centuries in existence. Millions of men have passed through its ranks in that time, and hundreds of thousands of women through those of the female branch, dwelling in perfect communism and purest socialism. This is the famous Order of the Benedictines. The Cistercians and Carthusians date from a thousand years back. The Friars Minor, the Friars Preachers and women's Orders of Carmelites, Franciscans and Poor Clares, six hundred or seven hundred years.

Far from decreasing since the times of the so-called Reformers of the sixteenth century, these associations of pious communism have had so prolific a growth that the Council of the Vatican had it on its programme to devise a scheme for their limitation, and the amalgamation at least of those whose foundation was only of comparatively recent date.

And they all succeed! It is surely worth the while of our agnostic socialists to inquire into the secret of that success. If they are sincere, it ought to be of the highest interest to them to know, that a socialism and a communism in the best meaning of those words, well regulated and successfully conducted, do exist and

are actually practiced at this very hour, and have existed so for centuries. This they may see if they but use their eyes, and may moreover learn the secret of this amazing fact. For the men and women who have gone apart, to tread the peaceful happy way of self-renouncement, have enrolled themselves in no secret societies. The conditions of their lives are perfectly well known. Their friends and relatives, from whom they are by no means severed either in converse or affection, know perfectly how they live, why they so live and are quite at ease as to their conduct and welfare and—their sanity. There is a certain class of people who do not weigh this latter fact sufficiently, when they officiously display their fears and anxiety about conventual life. It should make them feel, that they are meddling in a business which is the immediate concern of those friends and relatives to attend to, and who do attend to it and are perfectly satisfied, that it is all well with those who are near and dear to them. This fact is, also, a crushing refutation of the many coarse and gratuitous assertions on this subject, that rest as a blur and a blot on many a page of English literature for the last three hundred years.

Our agnostic theorists, and unsuccessful

experimentalists in the common life, will find that those other men and women have lived it, and died in it, because above and beyond this theatre of human passions, weaknesses and contentions, they lifted eyes of faith and held in view, as their goal, the life that ends not and knows no strife.

And they may rest assured, if they will only read the lesson of facts, that all other communism and socialism not founded in a faith like that, are simply impossible. There is no proof so convincing as experience. And if there is one experience more invariable in this world than another, it is that motives of faith have here succeeded, where bare human efforts have always failed.

In traveling the highways of the world, I have been surprised to find how many of our brethren, separated in the various sects, are strangely uninformed and misinformed about the great religious Orders actually existing in the Catholic Church. Whenever I attempted to describe them, they listened with either an air of incredulity or as if the tale were of some long-past romance. As for the many people who "believe nothing," I might as well have talked to them of the planetary beings of Mars or Neptune, so little did they suspect, that there were fellow-men around them leading such wondrous lives.

For such as these this chapter will not be amiss. "But surely you do not expect all the world to become Jesuits and nuns to improve their social condition?" By no means, but what I do assert is, that every experiment in socialism that is not founded, in a modified degree, of course, on the supernatural motives which inspire these great Orders, is sure to end in disruption and confusion. Without religion it could not endure.

CHAPTER VI.

Other Questions Not Answered by Science.

If the scientists, who ignore revelation, have presented us with only a very uninviting and somewhat slimy account of our origin, and are entirely mute before the question of what is to become of us, let us see, if they can satisfy or reconcile us to the state of things we have to endure in our intermediate passage between our cradle and our grave. The human life, transitory gift of each one of us, brief and sure to end, that is the problem of the highest interest to men.

Few there are who fail to feel how trying

and puzzling are its varying moods and varied fortunes. "Moving accidents," there are, "by flood and field"—perils, seeming injustices, fearful cruelties, unfair inequalities, pain, sorrow, suffering, race antagonisms, human slaughter by human hands, until the earth is soaked in blood, and human history grows red as we read. Men want to know—Why should these things be?

In another aspect, this planet of ours looks like a huge penal settlement adrift upon the sky. While all men are born to work of some kind, nine-tenths of them are condemned to hard labor for life. The lot of the majority is a rough one, and their condition is prolonged poverty, while everywhere absolute pauperism is more or less to be found. Suffering and sorrow with impartial hand knock at every door. There is no house, be it every so grand, or ever so wretched, that has not, or has not had, its secret sorrow and its chamber of sickness, pain and death.

Why has it been so ordered and who has ordered it so? Surely it was not man.

Each one's gift of life is a troublesome thing. It demands constant thought and care. Any relenting or neglect means starvation, dirt, suffering and disease. Each minute part of the bodily organization

must be administered to, and some of its functions are most humiliating. What is it in our nature, that makes some things painfully and shamefully repugnant to us, with no choice but submission to them? Life is threatened with fearful dangers. Think of the storms that rage, the hurricanes, tornadoes, the choking, blinding blizzards of winter, the sun-stroke of the summer-time, earthquakes, tidal waves (thirty-five thousand people destroyed in Japan the other day), of the annihilating lightning. When "the sea gives up its dead" that went down in doomed ships, what a host it will be! When the graves of earth shall yawn, how many shriveled corpses will bear the sears of violent ends!

Think of the fierce beasts and poison-bearing reptiles, that lurk upon the earth where the sun shines hottest — the prowling tiger, that carries off between his powerful jaws living, agonizing Indian villagers to devour them at leisure in his lair, and the other "tiger of the sea" that bites through bones and flesh at a single snap — the deaf adder of the sugar plantations, whose swift sting paralyzes from head to foot with electric speed — the sword fish that pierces a body and lashes it to death upon the waves — the stinging sea slug that benumbs the swimmer, and strangest beast of all,

the man-eating man — the cannibal of the Pacific seas !

Think of the wasting, desolating plagues and epidemics, cholera, yellow fever, bubonic malady, the leprosy. Men did not invent such things surely — and while they are laying their victims low in agony, no hand from outside is interposed to check their cruel course.

Perhaps the saddest feature of this world, and fraught with ever-threatening danger, are the inter-racial hatreds and aversions. Three hundred millions of Chinese call us "foreign devils" and "barbarians," and we call them in equally complimentary contempt "chinkies" and "chows." Two hundred and odd millions of Mohomedans curse us for "Christian dogs" and we call them "unspeakable Turks," and though their creed is "death to the Christians," of which they often give startling illustrations as recently in Armenia, yet when they ask for loans of money we have witnessed the strange paradox of Christians pouring millions of gold into their treasury — oh no, not for charity or peace offerings but for greed of the high interest offered, and the wily Turk pats those fat bags of money and says, "Ha, this will keep those Christian dogs from biting — they can not now hurt our Moslem nation, for fear of losing

all this money — we have them safe in ‘Turkish bonds!’ ” and so he slays Armenian and Greek, and the bonded “powers” stand around looking very foolish.

There are, besides, three or four hundred millions of Brahmins and Buddhists as far apart from us, and all the rest, as if they came from a different Creator.

And when those race aversions reach an acute stage, as they do from time to time, and the races come into contact, the spirit of human slaughter broods over men, and the earth takes on the appearance of a pandemonium where the battles rage. At this hour, what we know as Christendom, is one vast military camp. Its component nations, in dread and distrust of each other, are armed with the deadliest weapons yet invented, and fleets of fearful engines of destruction ride the seas.

Some men, seized with a just alarm, are agitating for peaceful arbitration as a substitute for war. But mankind and human passions, being what they are, they agitate for a Utopia. The godless recklessness which is a product of the “scientific method,” and which is so general in our times, makes war inevitable, and its total abolition, but a fond dream. Besides in such a state of society as the present, war is not without its uses.

But why should all this be?

And why — worse even than this — is it, that as soon as men begin to congregate in towns and cities, almost the first public structure they erect is a jail, to protect themselves from violent outbreaks of the vicious inclinations and the unruly behavior of their fellow-citizens? Jails are everywhere, and always well filled. Depravity and vice haunt the outskirts of every aggregate of humanity, and men have to tax themselves enormously for protection from their troubling and pervading presence.

Besides being a public danger, the ruin brought on individuals by moral evil, is in evidence on every side, and the petty, hateful passions that men bring into play against each other, embitter many a life, and mar the peace of social existence.

It would be pessimism to say that human life was made up only of this dismal catalogue of woes, and pessimism is false, and because it is false, it is also wrong. Much happiness is attainable and attained, and few indeed there are, who do not taste, at some time, the gladness of life. But *there* are those ugly facts which press us on every side, real and undeniable, and there is no reflective mind that does not impatiently ask — Why, why should these terrible things be?

And what answer have the agnostic scientists to give? Practically none — they *have* to notice them of course, but their explanations bear no message of comfort to men, they lead rather to despair.

The arch-agnostic Mr. Huxley confessed himself so puzzled by the woes of humanity, that he considered the happiest result would be, for some “friendly comet to collide with this wretched earth and end up the whole thing in destruction!”

Mr. Carlyle is represented by his biographer, Mr. Froude, as going about perpetually moaning and groaning over the “black confusion” of things on which, by the way, his thirty published volumes — the result of his much-lauded Golden Silence — shed not the smallest light for any one.

Mr. Herbert Spencer wraps himself in the clouds of the dark “Unknowable,” and can not, of course, pretend to trace to any cause or permissive will, what is beyond the dispensation and control of men. The disciples of Mr. Darwin and the legion developers of his evolution theory tell us as a rule, that all these cruel facts proceed, in blind and powerless obedience, from certain fixed laws, whose end is to aid in the indefinite process of his great Evolution. All the facts of life are normal and natural, and under the exigency of law are working to-

ward some final emancipation. Whether this explanation honestly satisfies themselves, is their own affair. It is but poor comfort to the actual and antecedent sufferers in this "Juggernaut" procession. There is no man who does not feel, that his is a personality distinct and separate from every one else — all his own. "What is to become of me?" has a most intimate and exclusive interest for each individual person, independently of every one else, and it is profoundly disappointing to be told, that this personality, of which I am so intimately conscious, is but an irresponsible factor in the vast process of evolution; an atom of a great aggregate borne upon an irresistible tide — whither — no one knows. Over and above this dismal spoliation of our personality, no information, as already stated, is given us, as to how we came to be cast into this whirling evolution, what good it is to do or what benefit is ultimately to be derived from it.

Thus the "scientific method" has left the world in a very unsatisfactory plight, and it is little wonder that confidence in its high promises of emancipating thought, liberating the human mind from superstitions, and elevating our intelligence, has weakened considerably.

But if the teachings of the "scientific

method" be cheerless and unsatisfying to the individual, the logical results of its influence on private conduct are disastrous to society. If men believed about themselves what they read in the agnostic science-books, and proceeded to act on what they learn from them, the world in the long run would become well-nigh uninheritable. The First Cause of our being, it is there stated, is not only unknown but unknowable and the final cause just as undiscoverable; it then becomes at once clear to men that they have no final responsibility for their conduct to any one. An unknown authority is no restraint on conduct, to a nebulous judge men give no sort of care, and we all know to what human conduct, without restraint, leads. The moment a man professes the principles of the "scientific method," which unfortunately is too often done in the foolish phrase, "Oh, I have no religion; I do not believe in anything!" you may quite fairly suspect that man in every relation of life. Suspect his honesty. With his principles, it would be quite foolish of him not to cheat, and turn everything else to his own advantage by fair means or foul — when it can be safely done. Suspect him of being hard-hearted, selfish and unfeeling. Why should he not be, if it suits him? He knows no authority over

his personal feelings. Suspect him of being vindictive and revengeful. He will pursue relentlessly whoever crosses or injures him. To gain his revenge he will not stick at secret murder. Why should he? If he can be safe from men, there is nobody else to fear.

Suspect his chastity. There are very few, if any at all, who are not intermittently solicited by lustful fancies. Will this agnostic, who spurns accountability and writes down divine commands as superstitious lies, hesitate at indulgence wherever and however he can, when so inclined? His logic would call him a fool if he did. Thus the free-thinking disciple of the "scientific method," unconsciously proclaims himself an object of distrust to his fellow-man in every dealing and social relation of life, and they in turn would be very foolish not to distrust him. Mutual trust and confidence are absolutely necessary for decent and tolerable society. The agnostic principle, if rigidly followed, utterly destroys those pleasant bonds, and society ceases to be either tolerable or decent.

Moreover, the basis of justice, on which human laws rest, is undermined by the scientific method in its account of human existence. Why should a judge impose a

penal sentence on one who quotes the agnostic evolutionist (whom a great part of the world delights to honor) for his assertion, that he is under the spell of a natural law impelling him to struggle for existence, and that there is no being known to nature who has given prohibitory commands, or who will bring him to account? He can plead from their text, that his impulses are nature's work, not his. Why punish him for them? It is unjust. He is but an irresponsible factor in the great evolutionary process. When he cheated and stole, and revenged and murdered, in the whole story of human life as told him by the evolutionists, there is not a shred of evidence to show him guilty of moral wrong or wickedness. There have been, and are in our days agnostic judges, Bramwells and Stephens, on whom the accused could turn, and declare from their own beliefs, or want of them, that their laws have no foundation, and their courts, frauds on poor evolved humanity.

The same would apply to domestic rule and parental authority. The children could turn on agnostic parents and demand by what right they corrected or punished them, for the peccadillos and unruliness to which all children are prone, but which make family life impossible if unrestrained. The

children can appeal to nature and impulse, sacred in the eyes of agnostic parents, and deny that they are in fault, and no fault, therefore no correction — why punish a poor evolved mud-fish? how expect moral rectitude in a lepidosiren or conscience in protoplasm? The “scientific method” cries out against such things.

Thus carried to its logical conclusions in practical life, agnostic science would upturn human society from its very foundation, and convert this earth into a pandemonium.

The clear perception of this has shaken the confidence of many minds in this much-praised “method” of dispensing with all information from the supernatural, and they are turning back again to the old ground for a more rational account of themselves, their lives and their destiny.

CHAPTER VII.

The Alternative of Science.

In contrast to the unaided and self-reliant “scientific method,” let us recall what the old story, believed for so long a time, and by so many, to be revealed, tells us about ourselves.

It certainly has the merit of presenting a picture of our origin, which does not repel or put us to shame. Of recent years that picture has been kept a good deal out of the common view, "skyed" by the men of science. It has moreover been smeared over by much protoplasmic mud, so that like a palimpsest manuscript, we must do some scraping to get at the original etching—which means that it is not easy to induce people, nowadays, to go over again carefully, so familiar a lesson as the Scripture story of the creation. But compared to the dismal tale of the scientists on the same subject, it is absolutely pleasant and most flattering to us. In place of mud swamps where "lepidosirens" swim and slumber, it introduces us to a fair garden where golden fruit is on the trees. Cool, clear streams are flowing on the carpet of green, through the glades, a wondrous variety of animals, tame and gentle, peacefully browse, and birds of every hue float and sing in the blue above.

There is one form just moulded and still lying upon the earth, but far finer and more perfect in line than any animal. And over that still inanimate form, the Great Maker, God, it is said—and said, remark, without any explanation or apology of wearying demonstration, just as a matter of course,

taken for granted as the great first logical necessity that all right reason demands and postulates — God breathes! That creative and mysterious secret — the *spiraculum vitæ* — life from the Divine breathing, courses at once through the finely modeled members of that prostrate form — it glows and moves, the eyes open and light up the features with intelligence, and then this last and greatest of the Creator's works rises and stands erect — the first living man. That is what we infer from the plain reading of Genesis, and what men for ages have been satisfied with, and proud to believe. But in these later times it seems that this will not do at all. It is too simple, too plain, too nursery-story-like for the trained and powerful modern intellect. Facts, it is alleged, have been brought to light by intelligent research which prove that this was not — could not be — the way in which we were made. The human mind is surely very perverse in this, as in other well-known things. You would suppose, that a handsomely set-up being like man, should be very glad just to find himself so, without inquiring too minutely how he came to be so gifted a being — the first, the superior among all the visible living things on this earth. But no, that position does not suit our moderns.

They want to sweep away that privileged pre-eminence as a childish fable, notwithstanding the visible evidence all around us, and reduce man to the same common level of origin with the animals, no greater specifically, no better essentially. "Grant," says Mr. Darwin, "a simple archetypal creature like a mud-fish with five senses, and some vestige of a mind, and I believe natural selection will account for the production of every vertebrate animal." Well, well, I much prefer the other story.

And that story, so long held by so many of our race as a sacred tradition, continues with a still more interesting simplicity. Adam, our prototype and first father being thus fashioned, the Great Creator makes over to him and his, with a generous bounty that men forget, as a gift forever, all the other wondrous works of his creation. He made him lord of creation, with dominion over every living thing. In trial of his ownership, Adam summons all living things to his presence, and lo, they obey his call! Submissively they defile before him, and as they pass, he names them according to their kind. But, as yet, there is a certain loneliness in his state. These animals are fair to see in the grace and freshness of their primal type, but from not one of them all comes back,

to their new master, an answering voice of intelligence — no communion on equal terms of soul and mind. The Great Maker, however, does not leave him in that loneliness. He prepares a delightful surprise for him. He throws him into a deep sleep, and as he slept, by some mysterious process of creation, not at all necessary for us to know, and which with our present limited intelligence, it is impossible for us to understand, he took from Adam's substance, material out of which he builds up another form like to his own, and sets it over against him to look on when awakened. With what delight and wonder, must he not have gazed on this new thing of exquisite beauty. He had seen the animals, and doubtless admired their wonderful formation, but what animal of them all showed anything like to that in shapeliness of form and comely grace? Its shape is like his shape, but, oh, more finely, more delicately, more exquisitely moulded! It moves and speaks, it comes toward him. Adam peers into those eyes on a level with his own, with joy he beholds a responsible intelligence in their light, and in rapture exclaims, "Now truly is this the flesh of my flesh and the bone of my bone," and he hails the first woman as "Eva — the mother of the living." This is how it reads in

the old, old story. No mention being made of an "archetypal creature like a mud-fish with five senses and a vestige of a mind," the scientists laugh it to scorn. "I would give absolutely nothing," says Mr. Darwin, "for natural selection, if it requires miraculous addition at any one stage of descent." "I hope," said Mr. Tyndall in his Belfast address, "to find in matter the origin of all terrestrial things."

To talk of the miraculous at the beginning of things, where all is miracle to us, seems shallow, if not impertinent. It is irritating to think that puny men, who pass away after a brief life, fancy themselves competent from a mere examination of fossil animal formations, to enter the domain of the Creator, and infallibly insist that the great mystery of life began in the way they think they have discovered, and in no other.

In view of the fact that the scientists in many countries, nowadays, regard the theory of evolution as a scientific truth, some of our writers, it is true, maintain that evolution is perfectly compatible with the story of Genesis, as far as the corporal formation of the race is concerned. Very well. If they wish to enter upon that experimental interpretation of the sacred Scriptures they are free to do so. The Church does not forbid it, provided they hold by the dogma that

God, as Creator, is back of it all. But let them not forget, in their enthusiasm for scientific research and their complacent acceptance, as scientific truths of the generalizations from biological and geological facts, that it is precisely that dogma which their agnostic friends want to have ignored. From their own avowal it is perfectly well known that their object is to dispense with the necessity or even the supposition of a Divine Creator. To our orthodox enthusiasts for evolution this should be a note of warning, not to allow themselves to be led too far afield. I know they say there is no danger; we can admit all the postulates of evolution and still assert that they are but the Creator's *modus operandi*. That they can do this is not at all so clear. If you admit a common protoplasmic origin for *all* living things, and a subsequent transitional change from species to species, how differentiate between rational and non-rational creatures? how explain responsibility and non-responsibility, accountability and non-accountability? Where does the rational basis of *man's* nature come in? At what stage of his evolution was it added on? Was it as he was passing from the mud-fish into the reptile, or from the reptile to the bird, or from the bird to the quadruped, or from the four-footed to the four-handed

animal, or finally from the erect quadrumanous, "furnished with a tail," into the man? Where, and when, and how, did our rational nature accrue to us? Whence the soul, with its moral sense and aspiration for immortality? Evolution has not only no word to tell us about that, but it is impossible to see how it can come into the theory at all. The truth is, biologists and geologists can legitimately argue on the subject of creation only *a posteriori*, that is from the few facts they have been able to marshal from the skeletons of animal life, the process of generation, and the surface of the earth. This, we all know, to be an imperfect and fallible method of deducing universal conclusions or establishing general rules. When scientists pass to *a priori* statements, that is, lay down how the creation *must* have taken place, they are guilty of the fallacy known to logicians as the *transitus a genere ad genus* — a fraudulent skip from one position to another position altogether different, and then proclaiming from the second what they purported to have found in the first. To make *a priori* infallible statements as to the manner of creation (which they do with seemingly great security), they must either be more than men and share the creative faculty themselves, or have stood on the level of

the Creator's platform while He was working, which is of course absurd. No matter what may be its merits as a theory, evolution proves far too little for us as rational, responsible and accountable men, and so will never satisfy us. It has no practical value for us as a light upon the *meaning* of our origin or ourselves, and may just as well be relegated to the glass cases of museums as a curiosity or conundrum of scientific speculation. The other story is more comprehensive and satisfying — it is certainly more agreeable, and it is as elevating as it is encouraging. It gives us an exalted idea of ourselves, to know that we are descended from a first pair, a man and woman fashioned by an Almighty Creator, and endowed with an intelligence far above the rest of His works. Secure in that thought, we are safe from the despair which must beset those, who believe that they have been cast out, unacknowledged and disowned, by some unknown and brute cause, into the whirling mass of the evolutionary struggle. We feel that there is an intelligent ownership back of us, and a Fatherhood above us, which will not permit the existence we have received, to be merely a torture and a mockery nor the aspirations implanted in our breasts — dreams of Tantalus.

There is hardly a doubt, that the many who are turning away dissatisfied with the conclusions of Agnostic Science, will find a more secure and peaceful refuge for the mind in the opening words of the ancient creed — “I believe in God the Father, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth and of all things.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“Lachrymæ Rerum.”

If the story science has to tell us of our origin be an uninviting one, still more dreadful are its lessons about the evils of life. As an explanation of the harassing problems of existence, with its manifold evils, and the “tears of things,” the bare theory of *natural selection, struggle for existence, and survival of the fittest* is revolting. Applied to sentient and intelligent beings, it implies the infliction of a shocking, meaningless cruelty — a blind, wanton injustice on the poor human race. For those who feel overborne by the evils of life, evils that are very real and very terrible, and have nothing to stay them but this bald theory

of struggle and survival, what refuge logically remains but

“To take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them,”

or to express it without poetry — commit suicide! Many are doing so now, almost daily, in countries where, formerly, that stupid revolt against the Giver of life, used to be extremely rare. Suicide clubs, we are told, have even been formed. Modern suicide has thus assumed a cool deliberateness where, before, it used to be the unreasoned act of a wild despair.

This is quite as it should be, according to the “scientific method” of accounting for things. If there were nothing but that, it is a proper and a wise thing for the unfortunate to kill themselves. But, happily, the great majority of rational beings hold the act of self-destruction, no matter how heavily life’s fardels weigh, as a thing to be abhorred. Why? Because they evidently do not trust the “conclusions of science,” they look elsewhere for the something more sustaining that “gives them pause,” before that dread and tragic act.

They find the motive in the old story of revelation. Millions have found that sufficient motive before them, millions find it now, and millions will continue to seek, and

find it sufficient, in spite of the fatal deductions from agnostic science.

The origin of evil has ever been the puzzle of the human mind. The ancients sought its solution in the absurdities and superstitions of polytheism. In the early Christian centuries an Eastern monk, in a clumsy, but perhaps pious effort to free God from any share in it, imagined his two eternal and coequal Principles, one essentially good, and the other essentially bad, so that every good thing comes from the one, and everything bad from the other. This blunt logic all metaphysicians agree to call an absurdity, since two eternal and opposing Principles are impossible. This doctrine had an immense vogue at the time, and Manicheism, as it was called from its author, counted numerous followers for nearly three centuries. Carried to its strict conclusions in practical life, the sect became a nuisance and a scandal, and its teachings and practices were many times refuted and condemned. It is strange that we should see in our day a revival of this exploded system with the same good-natured motive of finding a convenient escape from difficulties about the nature of God. Very recently a little book called “*Evolution and Evil*” was published in Edinburgh, in

which the author harks back on the old Manichean principles to fill a manifest gap in the evolution theory. The agnostic evolutionists either forgot to say, or had not the courage of the absurdity, that wickedness and crime must have been somewhere rudimentally inherent in their protoplasmic mud-fish, and did not forecast the time when jails would have to be built, for those dear little creatures evolved into men and women.

This hard-headed Scotchman clearly sees, where the evolutionary scientists egregiously break down. He is evidently dissatisfied with them, for stopping short at the point of all others the most interesting and important to us. But he has gone to the wrong source to supply the omission.

This is how, in outline, the origin of evil is accounted for in the story of Revelation. The picture, it now presents us, is not as fair or cheering as that in which it traced our origin. It is indeed a changed scene. The prospect is somber, the sky is lowering, the garden is full of weeds, the animals have gone wild — for a dire thing has befallen the fortunes of the first pair. He who made the gift of all things to this first man and woman could not, of course, withdraw Himself from His own creation. Nothing was more rea-

sonable than that He should exact some acknowledgment from them; that they should at least continue to know Him, to admit His sovereignty, and show a grateful submission. He therefore made one small reservation from their free use of all He had given them, as a test of this acknowledgment. To One infinitely rich in creative power, it did not really matter what that test was, provided it *was* a test. And certainly it does not seem much that He demanded. Of all this varied creation, which he placed at their disposal, He informed them that there was just one thing He wished them not to touch or use. But this aroused their curiosity, and through a perverseness, with which we have since become very familiar, though they had plenty of everything else besides, that one thing became the object of their intensest desire, the very thing that seemed to them they could least do without. They failed in the test, they broke down under so small a trial, and disobeyed. There is the origin of evil, the evil that affects us in this human life. So Milton said, five thousand six hundred years later expressing the survived tradition —

“Of man’s first obedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and *all our woe*,
With loss of Eden . . . sing, heavenly Muse.”

The Creator was displeased. Could anything be more just or natural than that He should have been? The first parents fell out of His favor. From being perfect in their kind, as the highest and best work of the mundane creation, made in the image and likeness of the creating Divinity, they deteriorated. The will, that opposed the Supreme Will, lost its strength, the intellect, that shared the Divine knowledge, lost its privilege, the image of the Deity was blurred in their souls, and they stood in the case of rebels. And when they began to beget children, they could only beget them of that nature in which they themselves were; could impart to them no other kind of nature, when begetting them, and so we all came to stand in the case of rebels, under a ban. This is the kernel of the story. It is an account, and the oldest account, of how the misfortunes, undeniable and ever-present, of our race came about. It is at least an intelligible account, it is reasonable and most likely. It has been very long in possession, and before it is cast aside as a myth, something better ought to be proposed in its stead. Have the agnostic scientists given us any juster reason, why humanity is in a penal state, why wickedness abounds, and calamities afflict, and why there is no such thing as perfect and long-continued happiness

or contentment, to be found in all this earth of ours? By no means. Their statements are most disheartening in presence of these hard realities, and conduce to despair, and they may thank the utter helplessness of their conclusions, for the reaction that is steadily setting in against their magisterial utterances.

On the other hand the story of the old tradition is most hopeful in its sequel. It tells of a restoration and the “blissful state” to be regained, as Milton words it. Such a theory gives a new and more hopeful complexion to human life; it makes the struggle worth enduring, because it gives an intelligible and stimulating meaning. The struggle is comparatively brief, and at the end of it, is the possibility of full and lasting compensation for every danger and every pain endured. Yes, says the scientists, if it were only true—the admixture of the marvelous, such as the talking serpent, savors at once of the mythical.

But why should it not be true? Is it because you have found no trace of it in biology and geology, that therefore it did not happen? That would be bad logic. Meanwhile certain facts of life are there, and you have not been able to assign any adequate cause for them. It is therefore unfair of you to interfere with those who fall back on the tradition of the race about them.

The first intelligent progenitors of our race were sure to transmit a minute and accurate account of all that happened at its beginning to their intelligent posterity. It would be contrary to the human mode of acting if they did not. It is incredible, that they never should have mentioned a word on a subject so deeply important to all posterity, and it is most improbable that what they imparted was not carefully repeated, at least substantially. So important is it, as affecting human life and conduct, that when it came first to be written down, multitudes have always believed, as a thing reasonable and quite to be expected, that the writer was guaranteed by the direct action of the great Creator from substantial mistake, or, in other words, inspired. It is reasonable to believe all this, especially as it assigns a sufficient cause for many things in human life and character, otherwise absolutely unintelligible to us. With regard to the marvelous incidents of the story, who can tell what is possible or impossible to a Creator of such wondrous skill and power which, if we are not blind, we must acknowledge him to possess?

Every man, not intoxicated to asphyxia with his own puny conceit, must honestly admit that he has no *locus standi* in objecting to the ways selected by an Agent

immeasurably superior to him, to bring about his purposes no matter how peculiar or even grotesque they may now seem to us. The matter being beyond our power and outside our province to interfere in, it is wiser to accept the only reasonable explanation, within our reach, of the strange state in which we find ourselves. It is more than merely wise to do it, it becomes imperative, when we see its practical bearing on our actual condition in life and on our ultimate fate. Look around on humanity in general as we know it. Is it not a grandeur in ruins, rather than a brand-new structure erected on flimsy foundations and progressing gradually to completion? When you look upon a stately ruin you never say, Here is something gradually growing to perfection; how fair it will be to look upon when completed! No, you judge from this shapely arch, that bit of tracery or those broken pillars that originally it had been a fine building. In the same way when amid the fierce passions, meannesses and deformities of human nature so abundantly illustrated for us by history, and made real to us by our contemporary wars, our jails and courts of law, we are able to trace remnants of a far nobler condition in general impulses, in deeds of gentle virtue, of self-sacrifice and heroism — in love for the beautiful, the pur-

suit of it in art, music, in poetry — in the yearnings for the good and the true, we say, How beautiful it must have been before the ruin came! So that our personal experience of humanity corroborates the tradition, that man began with the perfect human nature which some calamity disturbed and shattered. Even when some meanness or frailty overtakes us individually, the first thought that comes in sober mementos is, "Oh, for shame, we ought to have been above that!" showing that there is a remnant of a higher, nobler nature yet within us.

There is nothing in the shape of man that does not exhibit the remnant of a nobler nature. The blacks of North Queensland are supposed to be the very lowest types of humanity. If I may be pardoned a personal reminiscence, I wish to relate here how I found that remnant even among them. They were small incidents, it is true, but none the less they illustrate what I say. I was one day visiting a camp of blacks who lived on the warm sand-dunes inside a mangrove swamp, on the north side of Cooktown harbor. In front of one of the miserable huts which are only used as sleeping places, being long, narrow and scarcely three feet high, a poor old woman was seated on the ground industriously

knitting, with very primitive implements, a small open-work bag, such as children might use for school-books. The material was the native twine made from dried fiber and dyed in different colors. Anxious to get a memento of the rude skill of this very backward people, who seemed to me in their homes to have touched the lowest rung of the human ladder, I put a silver coin in her hand and made signs that I wanted the bag. She looked at it and shook her head, which I took to mean that she would not part with it. It was not so, however. One of the men came up and managed to explain that she did not wish to give it to me unfinished, but would finish it as soon as possible and send it over to-morrow. Considering that it was a good four miles across the water, I thought the chances of getting it very slight, still I left her in possession of the coin and passed on. As we were at breakfast on the trellised veranda of the house at which I was staying in the town at 7:30 the next morning, two of those coal-black natives timidly approached, holding up that bag! Honorable, was it not, in that poor creature?

Another day, strolling by the shore, I saw some Chinese *bêche-de-mer* fishers bargaining with a native black. Their net, it appears, had got fouled in the deep chan-

nel some distance from the shore. These blacks are famous divers, and the Chinamen were inducing him to go down to free their net. He at length consented, and put off with them in their boat. At that moment his wife, carrying a small child, came running down. It was too late to stop him, so she stood with riveted gaze looking at that boat. Beauty is not a strong point in those poor people, in fact it is not a point at all, but it was beautiful to see the play of fine qualities of soul and heart in that poor black face. The job turned out somewhat troublesome, and the diver had to make three different descents to the rocky bottom, remaining down what seemed to be quite a long time, each dive. While he was under water the young wife seemed beside herself. I do not think I ever saw such genuine feeling expressed in any face, white or black — there was tenderness, protest, devoted love in it, and when he came safe to shore, relief with a sort of sad, reproachful delight. Beautiful remnant of the nobler nature even in the dregs of humanity! I can not help adding in illustration of the abominable meanness of man that, a few minutes later, I saw those Chinamen cheat that poor black! They put him off with two ounces of coarse tobacco and a handful of stale biscuit, for a task that gold

coin would not have induced themselves to undertake. The poor fellow took that squalid pay quite meekly and went away. There be yellow men, thought I, in some things, lower than Queensland Blacks.

Is it not more rational to believe that such virtues have been left in a nature once all virtuous, and that such vices come from its deterioration, than to assert that both are developed out of mud-fish?

Mere science leaves man without hope in his miseries. It admits them as facts; it even points them out, but gives no satisfactory reason why they are there, and supplies no motive for the patient endurance of them. Doleful, indeed, if not cruel, is its attitude in presence of the universal fact of death. When the quickly passing life of each individual is over, and he must leave behind all he loved, prized, and strove for, science stands by in pitiable and helpless silence.

Not so the theories of revealed tradition. It has the story of a reconciliation between a displeased Creator and ungratefully delinquent creatures. The nature passed on to their progeny by the first pair, after their disobedience, is to undergo a process of restoration by the proffered intervention of the Godhead, and, by the fulfillment of new and not very difficult conditions,

the title-deeds, forfeited by the bankrupt parents, to the "blissful state," are to be given back to all the children of men. Here at once a meaning is given to human life, the touch-spring is supplied to human action. The trial and the struggle endure, it is true, for each individual of the race. But the very possibility of reinstatement is an end worth his efforts. The great sanctions for upright conduct are kept ever present to him — immense reward for success — penalty for willful failure. These, with the higher feeling of loyalty to the intentions of the benevolent Creator, supply motive power to the whole moral world. They are the real and efficient agency for civilizing humanity, and have been admitted and are still admitted by the majority of men, to be the best the world has got up to the present moment. They have inspired and still continue to inspire all that is best in heroic self-devotion. They sweeten social life, help to the patient, if not cheerful endurance of pain and sorrow, and altogether have proved far too practically useful to the human family, to be contemned and renounced at the summons of a science, which has but a gospel of darkness and despair to offer in their stead. That which has been the mainstay of millions of the most civilized

people in the past, and has best reconciled them to life in its varying fortunes, it would be most unwise to discard until at least something as good has been found. It is certain that the results of scientific research supply no such substitute. A great multitude in our time have been led away by the ably-edited pretensions of the scientists, and have laid aside the guiding motives of life derived from faith, relinquishing all external observances of religion. Yet the restlessness of minds has by no means abated. It shows itself, in many ways at this hour, to be as great if not greater than ever. The recent closing of the grave over many of the men who made the greatest stir in the mental world for the past forty years, has given food for sobering reflection to many of their disciples and admirers who, weary of the emptiness of their master's conclusions, are longing again for the comfort of a confident and unfaltering faith.

They found its formula, regarding our origin, in the opening words of the old Creed already quoted. The second part of that Creed gives motive and meaning for the human life they are actually leading:—
 “And I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, who for us men and for our eternal safety, came out of the heavens,

and took flesh through the Holy Spirit from Mary, the Virgin, and was made man. He was also crucified for us, suffered, and was buried. And the third day He arose from the dead and ascended to the heavens; thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

This describes the restoration of the race and the final issue that awaits it. He who raised it up again, helped it and made salvation possible for its members, will also be their Judge.

"Oh, but this is bringing us back to our catechism again — it is faith and most of it must be taken on trust!" Precisely, and why should you be ashamed of it? Lift yourself above your little self and think of the distinguished men — men whose transcendent ability is admitted on all hands — who at the present day all around you, openly believe and advocate all that. Mr. Gladstone does so, and who will deny his superiority of intellect? England's great Prime Minister Lord Salisbury believes it all. England's Lord Chancellor believes it, so does conspicuously her Lord Chief Justice, so do most of her able jurists. So do her ablest diplomatists Lord Dufferin, Sir Rutherford Alcock (lately deceased after a most distinguished career), Sir Philip Currie, Lord Brassey and the present

able Ambassador to the Court of Russia, Sir N. O'Connor. President McKinley believes it, so do his living predecessors in that highest of all America's positions, Mr. Harrison and Mr. Cleveland. These are but some of the great names, and is your judgment likely to be of more value than the convictions of such men as these? Why, before such an array of ability on the side of belief, the cynical apostasy of a John Morley (vide his “Voltaire”), the ravings of Thomas Carlyle as exhibited by his trusty showman, Mr. Froude, and the poisoned shafts of Prof. Huxley — the Bob Ingersoll of England — seem impertinences of no weight whatever.

Yes, the goal of the return from this unsatisfying agnostic science is faith, belief in the communications vouchsafed to us by the Great Master, Owner, and Maker of us and of all things.

CHAPTER IX.

“Statio Bene Fida.”

No one, at all observant of the signs of his times, can fail to see this movement away from agnostic science and back to

belief. But is there a sure haven for the unrest of the returning? If unfaith and faith were just two camps, the question would be simple enough. Unfortunately the ungovernable tendencies of human thought, its refusal to be restricted, its opposition to restraint, no matter how reasonable that restriction and restraint may be demonstrated to be, have divided the followers of faith into many camps. This being a fact and a sad one, it is too well known to be denied, and too real and present with us to be ignored. This domestic quarrel has been the excuse for agnosticism, and is the strong point with the remaining adherents of that forlorn cause. In any sincere effort, then, to be of use as a guide to the unrestful soul, after its incautious excursion into the bewildering maze of agnostic science, this unpleasant fact must be faced and honestly weighed.

True, it has the disadvantage of making the writer appear in the light of a special pleader for his own views, and special pleading arouses suspicion and arms prejudice. "Oh, he is fighting for his own side of course — all he says is sure to be biased in favor of the section to which he belongs." And so, when there are contending interests, it is hard to get a hearing for the special plea.

I therefore wish to avoid all appearance of that as much as possible, and merely invite the reader to the inspection of facts as they exist about us. Facts are the most persuasive of arguments. They are not so dry as polemics.

I suppose then, that the intelligent wanderer, in quest of the dropped threads of his old faith, would like to give in his adherence to a body of doctrine about which there is no uncertainty, fluctuation, or dispute among its particular followers, rather than to one about which there is much dispute, divergence, and dissent among those who variously profess it.

I suppose he would prefer to join a body that has a long and continuous history, to one that has a much shorter and somewhat broken history. I suppose he would feel more secure in associating with a body which is numerically greater, while agreeing among themselves as a unit, than all other dissidents from that body put together and disagreeing among themselves. Now such exactly are the characteristics of the two phases of Christian faith which, as mere facts, visibly and undeniably confront him in the world to-day.

Everybody knows who Leo XIII is. He is the two hundred and fifty-seventh, in direct succession, of the pontiffs who held

his place in Rome for nearly nineteen centuries. Everybody knows that there are over one thousand bishops all over the world, men of education and intelligence, many of them of admittedly high intelligence, who all hold their place and title from him, acknowledge his authority, and are in perfect agreement with him in every essential particular. Under them there are between two and three hundred thousand clergy in the same perfect agreement with their bishops, and under them again between two and three hundred million of laity in perfect accord with their pastors. No danger of our friend feeling lonely in such a company at any rate. Let him enter the poorest of their churches, be it on an Irish mountain-side or in a bush-town at the Antipodes, or one of the famous cathedrals of continental Europe or in the Spanish Americas, he will hear the same identical doctrine taught in each and all, and the same rite of divine worship observed. That must appeal to him as something admirable, and arrest his interested attention.

Here, then, is one broad fact, easily verifiable, spread out to his view at this moment.

Everybody knows, also, who the young Tsar Nicholas is. He is the head of a

church, a very numerous church, but his title as such does not reach very far back, at most to his savage ancestor, Peter, in the last century, while the faith of that church, which came from Greece, is substantially the Roman faith, only marred by a break in allegiance to the lawful successor of the apostles, and by denial of his authority as divinely appointed judge and guardian of that faith.

Everybody knows who Emperor William II is. He is the head of a church whose title goes back only a few centuries, and the faith of that church is in entire disagreement with that of the Greek and Russian, and only a very fragmentary agreement indeed with that of the Roman, while from the principle of free private judgment and by consequence the lack of a standard within its own limits, there is abundant domestic disagreement and independent sectional branches.

Everybody knows who Queen Victoria is. She is the head of a church, but her title to spiritual supremacy passed to her only indirectly from the Tudor line of monarchs from whom she is not even descended, and who usurped that sacred title only a few hundred years ago because of a rebellious quarrel with the Pope over an adulterous marriage. Meanwhile, the Anglican

Church is entirely independent as to authority and standard of belief, from the Greek-Russian and the German Lutheran. Within the English fold, too, the right of private judgment prevails, and has been a powerful dissolvent. As a result there are nearly two hundred distinct and independent religious sects in England and throughout the wide domain of her colonial empire, and also in English-speaking America the same strange spectacle, in proportionate extent, may be witnessed. Indeed the ultimate logical result of this free private judgment seems to be — as many religions as there are men. And is it not a curious thing, that men demand a freedom in religious matters not permitted them in matters of State, or in other relations of life? The State does not tolerate private judgment about its constitution and its laws, if carried into practice, as it is, so unrestrainedly, in religion.

However, as a matter of fact, this is the other phase of Christian faith presented to actual view by the most civilized of the nations to-day. That this is pretty accurately their condition nobody can deny, as it is a thing of common and public notoriety.

Now is it likely that our friend will lightly commit his spiritual hopes and future welfare to such a Babel confusion of relig-

ious guidance? Common prudence and sound sense would deter him from so little promising a course. Besides if he hears of the prayer of the Divine Founder of the whole system — “*that the world may know, O Father, that Thou hast sent me, let these be one as Thou art in me and I in Thee*” — it will be clear to him, that there *must* be something very wrong about all these people, for they are not *one*, but two hundred churches. It would therefore be something more than imprudent, it would be rash and dangerous, to follow after their way.

If he is to subscribe in full to Christianity, from which, supposedly, he originally started out in quest of something new, he has but one alternative. The fact of the marvelous unity combined with great numerical strength, of historical tradition, will forcibly appeal to his logical mind and incline him to become one of the two hundred and fifty millions who own Leo as visible chief.

However, it must be admitted that he will be confronted with another fact, for which the restlessness of certain minds in other disrupted branches of Christianity is accountable. There have been many in our day who, not venturing to go the whole daring length of total unbelief under

the lead of agnostic scientists on the one hand, and not content, on the other, to rest under the restraining soul-discipline of Christianity, have bethought them of the Buddhistic faith of the Far East, which seemed to them to impose the minimum of individual obligation and to be free from harassing complications of doctrine. Hence the recent introduction of what has been named Theosophy among the more civilized peoples.

I doubt if this curious cult will arrest the attention of any capable or reflective mind for any long time. It has had, however, a certain vogue, and its present standing may be examined not unprofitably. It is as hard to get any precise statement of this new *osophy* or of the Buddhism it is supposed to represent, as the late Professor Freeman said it was to fix Freemasonry as a historical fact, or come at any reliable evidence about it (*Italy*, page 34).

In a certain American university the dissatisfied Christians of a philosophy-class not very long ago, with a view to adopting Theosophy as a substitute for the faith of their fathers, invited a Hindoo Bonze or priest, named Dharmapala, to give them an authentic and concise version of Buddhism. To elicit more readily what they wanted to know, they decided to proceed by

way of question and answer, so they put up the Hindu on the platform of their hall for interrogation, and appointed their professor as leading cross-examiner. But it soon appeared that the professor was like a man diving on a rubber surface, he could not get under. After several questions, answered in the high-flowing and vague style of the Hindus, this professor, who himself was evidently tired of the version of Christianity as taught in one of the two hundred sects in which he was brought up, seemed to lose patience and exclaimed with an air of profound disappointment: “But all this scarcely differs from what Christianity exacts.” Nirvana, being the heart of the system, the professor next questioned him about this. What was its nature? how was it to be attained? and when attained what was it like? On these points Dharmapala discoursed in grandiose and soaring phrases, to which the examiner frankly declared he could attach no practical meaning. He finally asked the learned Bonze to give them a short, intelligible description of what they might expect in the state of Nirvana; he replied that “no one having yet attained to it, it would be impossible to do so!” A full account of this proceeding appeared in the San Francisco papers in the early

summer of the year 1897. But we have not since been informed whether a temple to Buddha has been erected in this very eclectic Californian university.

An effort was made to popularize Buddhism among the upper classes in England under the pontifical patronage of Mr. Edwin Arnold before he was made a knight (and there was a time when the English Court would not have admitted an *English* Buddhist among its equerries), but it took no hold there. The event of Madam Blavatsky and Prof. Max Muller's able exposure of that lady's ignorance and charlatan pretensions, may be considered the requiem of Theosophy as far as England is concerned. The theosophical priestess subsequently removed her headquarters to Paris. Among a certain class of the French, ever ready to experiment with the newest sensation, she met with some success, but her poor, clumsy conjuring with familiar spirits from the Pamirs, was exposed by a fellow-countryman, the editor of a St. Petersburg journal. He wrote a biography of this Mrs. Blavatsky, and not the least useful of the labors of the London Psychical Research Society was the translation of that remarkable and sadly interesting book and its circulation over the English speaking world. How any sane person could continue to pursue

this phantom of a faith after reading this book passes comprehension.

It is true that Mrs. Blavatsky's very erratic disciple, Mrs. Besant, published another biography enthusiastically favorable to her, but it was manifestly compiled from material supplied by the most interested of witnesses, the lady whose praises are sung.

It is also true that much has been said in favor of the purer forms of Buddhism, notably by Mr. Max Muller, and the word of that wonderful scholar is of great weight. But by the purer forms the professor is careful to explain, the high moral maxims which he found in its ancient writing. Surely we need not go to Ceylon or Thibet for high moral maxims! Are they not to be found as high as any one need desire in the book from which, with scarcely any doubt, Guatama Buddha himself and his disciples largely borrowed — the Old Testament — and which the New Christian Testament indorses and adopts?

Much is made, too, of the statement that Buddhism is the religion of three hundred millions of the human race. But far too much is made of this. Without due examination, that broad statement is certainly calculated to impress and disturb the ordinary un-Buddhistic mind. But, first, supposing them three hundred million — it

may be asked, What is the quality of that portion of the human race? Are the people composing it among the foremost, best educated and most civilized peoples of the world? Surely not.

Again the statement itself is contested. Travelers, who have come from the Eastern lands, assert that this number, as representing those who are really Buddhists, is enormously exaggerated. I have seen it reduced by some writers to as much as one-tenth!

But even allowing for a very great number, it is beyond doubt that the divisions and differences among them in creed and practice far exceed even the fragments into which the so-called reformed-Christianity is split.

Almost the first object, that greeted the visitor to the last great World Exhibition in Paris, was a huge statue of Buddha. Any civilized man gazing at that most in-artistic, clumsy and stupid-looking travesty of the human form, must have felt nothing but aversion, and passed on, with a sigh of pity for the aberrations of the human mind, when abandoned to its own purblind groping for the great secret.

Mahomedanism will also greet our friend as another of the world's great facts in supernaturalism. To find what is attractive

or of value in that, he has but to do two things — examine what historians who write of the sixth century have to say of its founder — that remarkable Bedouin camel-driver of this period, and of his preceptor, the ex-Nestorian monk. Next, reflect on what is the lowest animal instinct in men and what Mahomedanism promises and permits in satisfaction of it. When he has done this, it can be safely left to himself to say, whether respect for his own intelligence and regard for our weaker and gentler sisters, will permit him to enrol himself among the followers of the prophet's present representative, whom an English statesman has proclaimed to our age as “the great Assassin.”

He will encounter still another fact in the world of religions, far less in proportion than the last, but far greater in significance and even mystery. He will see a people some seven millions in number, scattered through the world, owning no country, yet as distinct and apart from all other peoples, as if their “place and nation” had not been taken away. If he read history aright he will think gently of the Jew. He will forget Shakespeare's Jew — the worldly and commercial Jew, that deals in “usance” and “pounds of Christian flesh.” He will remember this people for their grand tradi-

tion. He will remember them as the progenitors of our whole race, as the chosen people of God, and of old time, His most favored nation. He will think of them as the people whose influence on the world stands first and without any rival; and he will think of them in the later time when, alas! they let their day go by, and standing belated by the wayside, allowed their sacred inheritance to pass to the Gentile. He will think of them then, as the poor outlawed, hunted race, driven and persecuted for weary centuries at the hands of those whom the divine compassion of their gentle Master, Himself of Jewish blood, should have taught humaner methods. He will recognize in their marvelous preservation a divine intention and a lingering of divine regard. He will recognize remnants of their greatness in their great intelligence which, when the opening comes to them, makes them still leaders among men, as it has at this hour made them princes in the world's commerce. And finally, he will remember them as the people of a prophecy yet to be fulfilled, which tells that their latest progeny on earth will be rallied to the spiritual kingdom of Him, whom their fathers, foiled in their mistaken hopes for national glory, rejected and delivered over to torture and to death.

It is not good in us to think unkindly of Jews when the Master's latest prayer was for their forgiveness.

They are a living fact in our world to-day. In their creed they profess and possess the truth—the genuine truth—that we too hold in honor—only they have halted short of its divine fulness.

Such is the full prospect before those who are returning disappointed and empty from their agnostic experiences. If to the careful use of their intelligence, they but add a humble prayer for guidance and for strength, there is little doubt which anchoring ground will appear to them the *statio bene fida*—the right trusty harbor for their souls.

CHAPTER X.

Important and Practical.

The returning agnostic will find that in the “safe harbor,” indicated in the last chapter, his love of science need not, by any means, be shed at its entrance nor its fascinating pursuit be necessarily abandoned.

Though the parent church of Christianity does not assign the place of first importance

to the study of the natural sciences, she is far from forbidding that study to her members. This very year 1897 gives a striking proof of this. The Fourth Catholic Scientific Congress was held at Fribourg in Switzerland at the end of the summer. The most eminent Catholic scientists — and their number is not small — were invited to attend. The meeting was thoroughly representative of the Catholic world. There were delegates from Great Britain, Ireland, the United States, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany and Belgium. Two hundred papers, on scientific subjects, were read at the sessions of the Congress.

Almost every branch of human knowledge was discussed — the social question, law, history, political economy, physics, mathematics, astronomy, biology, art, philosophy, religion. Surely a syllabus ample enough to satisfy the most ambitiously scientific. All these had their share of friendly debate. The leading and most useful feature of the discussions seems to be an honest effort to determine what has been really demonstrated in science and what has not, thereby separating true science from that which has not, as yet, established its title to that august name.

The Head of the Catholic Church, far from frowning on this enterprise, as fraught

with danger to matters of defined faith, sanctioned it by his permission and full approval.

But there is, besides, permanent testimony to the freedom of scientific pursuits within her fold, in the programmes of her higher educational establishments in all parts of the world. These programmes may be had for the asking anywhere, and a perusal of them will show how false it is to say, as Mr. Huxley unfairly said, that this church is always opposed to the study of science.

The pursuit of science in itself she has never opposed. But she has combated, and must always combat the *conclusions of certain scientists*, in which the existence of God is denied, or in which He is declared to be unknown and absolutely unknowable, and therefore is not to be counted or thought of at all in human affairs; in which the human soul and man's immortality are also counted out, and in which all revelation or knowledge, derived from Him who created us, about ourselves and the meaning of our lives, is to be rejected as a fraudulent and absurd invention — an imposture! Yes, these assertions alleged to be directly derived from science, the Church, and I fancy the saner and better part of mankind, will always contest and refute, maintaining that

they are not legitimate conclusions from true and demonstrated science. Why they are persistently asserted by men of name before the world, is a secret of their own personal and private lives which the great accounting day will manifest. It is certain the "conclusions of Science" favor the freest kind of living. They act as mutes on the strings of conscience.

The returning agnostic will find, too, in the teaching and practice of that church, not mere dry speculative dogmatism having reference only to the life hereafter, but much that is valuable in its practical bearing on the actual life of the world, much that is of great service to society, curative of its ills and fenders to its dangers.

What are the things which agitate and alarm society at the present day?

1. There is the unrest of the masses of the laboring poor — their awakening to the consciousness of the fact that they *are* poor and ill-provided with the comforts of life, and are slave-driven in work which at best is precarious, and from the profits of which only the very slenderest share comes to them, while there are a favored few into whose hands enormous wealth has been gathered, who have apparently bought themselves free from general sentence of toil, who live in extreme comfort and luxury,

and who command an abounding market of needy men to do everything for them, even to the increasing of their already great stores of riches. This glaring inequality is the root of the socialism, so universally discussed in our times, and is assuming such threatening attitudes against establishing order and peace almost everywhere now.

He will find in this church some very practical teachings to assuage this acute feeling, and mitigate the danger of its violent outbreak — if listened to.

In a former chapter I briefly, but truthfully, described numerous societies of men and women, who actually exist around us and have existed for a very long time, where comradeship and harmony prevail with perfect equality and unity of purpose for a common good — a good by no means restricted to self, but helpful to others, and a life, not ease-loving and indolent, but ceaselessly and devotedly active in the cause of ignorant, needy and suffering humanity. It is the supernatural motive — the reflex from the eternal life, and all they are taught about the will, the justice and the holiness of the Omnipotent, which alone makes the self-devotion, the self-immolation of such an existence, possible in this world. And it is the same motive and none other, ap-

plied of course in a lessened degree and modified to meet the circumstances of worldly occupations, that will restrain the poor within the bounds of moderation in their just efforts to better their condition, and guide them securely in the way of happiness. It is through men's minds the world is best governed — better than by the ruder means of force and terror, and unless it is ingrained in men how unwise it is to give all their thought absorbingly to a life so passing and so short, and practice no virtue, which is the price of better things in the more enduring one — in other words, admit the supernatural into their thoughts and daily lives — in vain will you propose “nationalization of all the instruments of production,” “unification of labor,” and “equal distribution of profits,” “land tax” or “single tax,” Fourier's “Phalansteries,” Comte's “Polity,” or any of those well-intentioned schemes for social improvement, of which the last forty years have been so prolific. Nor is the supernatural motive a nostrum, with which to beguile the poor. It is for rich and poor alike. The supernatural must be readmitted into the lives of both in much larger measure than it is at present, before there is the slightest chance of restoring peace between capital and labor. It is quite cer-

tain that these benevolent schemes of the Georges, the Marks, and the Morrisises will never succeed. With men, as they are now, they are unworkable. That the supernatural no longer occupies the prominent place it ought in the lives of multitudes of men in our time, is due mainly to the wrangling and divisions of sects since the sixteenth century. So the first step in efforts to restore it would be, to bring about a reunion of Christendom under one form of faith.

But this, it will be answered, is as Utopian as the schemes of single taxers and nationalizers "of land and instruments of production." I do not entirely admit that, but I say that unless some approach to it is made, notwithstanding the impious sneers of a reckless minority, you may despair of a settlement of the social question. Agitation and storm and fights will come — violence and bloodshed will be witnessed again, but when their short season is over, things will fall back into the same if not a worse, state again — the future but repeating the past. Mr. Benjamin Kidd in his "*Social Evolution*" says that the "altruism," on which the socialists depend to make their proposals a success, is not to be found in human nature. He maintains that "the altruism, that ever did anything

or ever will do anything among men, has been generated by religion and religion alone."

The late Professor Blaikie, whose sympathies were strongly in favor of a moderate socialist programme, also confesses in one of his essays that "the true altruistic spirit, necessary for the success of socialism, must come from the fountain of religion, and socialism must enter into closer alliance with religion." It is a pity that many will have to ask—"Which?" Socialism is as broad as humanity, and religion ought to be able to confront it as one, and with no faltering and uncertain doctrine. This latter condition, at any rate, our returning friend will find well fulfilled in the great church still united under Leo XIII, who, by the way, is acknowledged in our day as the best exponent of socialism in its highest and truest sense.

2. Our age is suffering, and in some places alarmingly so, from a deplorable change in women's view of maternity.

In France premiums have been offered by government for larger families!

Not long since a prominent New York physician, in an article contributed to the *North American Review*, raised the alarm for America on this delicate but most important subject. He declares it has become

the rule with American wives, either not to bear children at all, or to have but one or two at most. Among the causes to which he attributes this dreadful state of things, he notes "the loosening of religion's hold on American parents." They no longer regard its strict prohibition of this practice, and have taken the matter into their own hands. In the Catholic Church a most successful remedy is applied to this. The practice and obligation there enjoined of the regular "confession of sins," which has come in for such aspersion at the hands of the separatist Christians, but which is really one of the greatest forces for moral good in the world, though the least obtrusive and most silent, renders such deplorable practices impossible. Every Catholic woman knows, that the benefit of this sacrament would be uncompromisingly denied, until all such sinful tampering with nature's laws was completely abandoned. And their faith in their church's teaching always prevails.

It is not out of place to add here that the prejudiced attacks on "the confessional" — happily growing less in this more reasonable age — have no foundation in fact. Here is a simple way to test it. You may meet everywhere whole families, whose members of both sexes have made it a

lifelong practice "to go to confession." Ask any of them collectively or individually, if any harm or evil has come to them from that practice? Their answer will be, "No." Ask them if they ever heard anything in that confessional that was not for their good? You may rely on it — their answer will be, "Never." The thing stands to reason. If there were in this practice adopted by millions of people, as a part of their lives and so for many hundreds of years, anything radically or grossly wrong, it would have become of such public notoriety long ago, that no one of respectability would be found to follow such a practice; but as many follow it as ever — many most excellent people, you will find, if you only take the trouble to inquire, which proves that a most unjust prejudice has been propagated against it.

3. Our age is suffering from a loss of respect for the sacredness of the marriage bond. Facility of divorce, which now nearly everywhere prevails under the unrighteous usurpation of the civil power in the domain of an institution directly established and safeguarded by God Himself, has resulted in sad consequences to society. It is not unusual for a woman to meet at social gatherings two, three

and even four men to whom she had been severally married! The disruption of families follows — so many foundations of civilized society uprooted. Children are robbed of their homes, and neglected. The filial feeling, hitherto so wholesome and sweet an influence in life, is blighted and ruined by a preeocious knowledge of the disgraceful frailties of parents.

The most repulsive feature in this authorized lieense of manners, is that the divorce courts offer a premium and an invitation to vice, for almost immediately the “respondent and co-respondent” get married. These shameless people often unblushingly own that their infidelities have been committed so that the divorce court may have evidence to set them free to indulge their unnatural and illicit amours. And the court obediently enters into their plot.

Against this manifest drifting into pagan barbarism, the ancient Church stands firm. It proclaims to the world, that marriage is not a thing to be tampered with by any human authority whatsoever. “Whom God has joined together let no man put asunder,” is her charter on this. The yoke which has been deliberately and validly assumed — it is God’s will, she declares — must be borne to the end. The marriage bond is sacred — made by God Himself,

and given into the keeping only of those who represent Him. No marriages, she says, done in slipshod fashion over the counter of registry offices shall be blessed by her. No halting, conditioned form of marriage on which rests the gloomy shadow of a prospective divorce, and takes away from the young people that security of "settling in life" they so eagerly looked forward to, is permitted by her — it must be "for better, for worse till death do us part." And if in a minority of cases the yoke hopelessly chafes, and the couple prove ill-suited to each other, she meets that with the legal separation from "bed and board," but insists, that *for the common good*, the inconvenience of celibacy must be borne until the death of one shall set the other free.

4. Our age suffers from a lack of honesty in public and private life. People are beginning to be puzzled to know, what to do with their money, which prudent thrift rightly dictates to them to put by for "the rainy day." The exposure of gigantic swindles like that of J. Balfour, ex-M. P., &c., the wholesale plunder of the Panama stockholders, the "booming" of worthless or fictitious properties and stocks as investments, awaken the world, from time to time, to the fact that multitudes of men

have lost all conscience about stealing the money of others. The expensive excitement of "turf" and "ring" gambling has created a passion for petty pilfering which leaves no employer safe. The system of electing office holders and judges only for a short period, has opened the door to corruption and dishonest jobbery of all kinds, where that system prevails, until people get little value for their taxes and can scarcely get justice fairly administered.

To this serious and dangerous wrongdoing, the Church firmly opposes the "refusal of absolution in confession" to the thief and cheat, no matter of what rank or position, until restitution be made to those who were wronged, and until robbery in every form be abandoned. The world little knows the powerful help it lost in its affairs, when the separating Christians of the sixteenth century decreed to discontinue the practice of confessing their sins.

5. Our age is suffering from a loss of what may be called, for want of a less awkward word, *femininity* in women. An ambitious spirit has entered into them. They are hungering for a share in all public affairs, and aim at abolishing all distinctions of sex in the avocations of life. Why

may not we do everything that men do? they say. And they proceed to do it—never reckoning how much of their charm they shed with their skirts. They stop not even at skimming the highways and dashing through our streets, in that new and least modest of postures—astride of a bicycle.

Well, the Church has nothing *de fide* on the manners of women, but she has plenty to restrain their excesses in the wise traditions from which she does not intend to depart, and in the golden rules for women's conduct which she has by no means abrogated. She has quiet, but sufficient, means to see to it that her children, who are styled in her liturgy the *devotus femineus sexus*, shall not make themselves—instead of helpful examples in modest reserve—wanton occasions of spiritual hurt to men. Women owe their present high place in civilization, as well as their rescue from a barbarous degradation in past times, exclusively to the action of this ancient Church. They should, not ungratefully, remember that. If they choose to forget it, and despise her counsels, so wise from long experience, it is certain they will fall back into the same cruel subjection again. Let them turn their eyes to the Orient! Who of them

would be Moslem women or Hindoos? Well, to that, the half-unsexed woman of to-day is inevitably hastening her sisters of the future!

Thus our friend will find that the practices and teachings of this oldest Christian church, are by no means all dry mysticism or valueless speculation. All the other way. There is hardly a detail of human life on which they have not a direct and beneficent bearing, and undoubtedly make for the true civilization and happiness of the race.

A signal service was rendered to the Christian world when the Council of Trent, amid the mental confusion of the sixteenth century, issued a clear and unhesitating re-statement of the whole Catholic creed. The straying agnostic would do well to refer to that settled standard of faith for further details. Many editions of it have been published in the Latin tongue as well as in translations, and may be procured from any Catholic publishing house. True, since that time two points of doctrine have been defined — the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Infallibility of the Pope *quoad fidem et mores*. But *defining* does not mean inventing. It does not mean that those points were not hitherto believed. On the

contrary, it is an affirmation that they *were always accepted* as true by the Church generally, but that no pressing need of formulating them as beyond all dispute, that is, *defining* them, having arisen, they were not, hitherto, incorporated in set terms, among the articles of faith.

CHAPTER XI.

Present Day Dangers to Believers.

There never was a time when "the just man living by faith" was more exposed to disturbing influences than he is at present.

1. Magazines and Reviews have multiplied to an enormous extent. They are not what they used to be. They have no particular views, no principles, take no sides, and represent no party. They open their pages impartially to error and to truth alike. They are open debating ground, from which no subject is excluded, where nothing is sacred any longer, nothing exempt from the most searching and adventurous criticism. Side by side with an interesting account of travel or some question of politics, you have a fierce onslaught on the Bible, on some particular point of be-

lief or religious practice. To take a haphazard instance look at the *North American Review* for December, 1895, where Prof. Goodwin Smith disports his Voltaireanism. Look at almost any number of the London *Nineteenth Century*, or of the *Fortnightly Review*, the same medley of confusing views on every aspect of religion and the supernatural may be encountered. This species of literature has a very wide circulation and makes favorite short reading for hosts of men who are too busy to study things *au fond* or read whole books. There is little doubt that this literature is accountable for much of the unbelief and of the unsettled belief, that prevails.

It is, then, a danger to the believer.

But what is to be done about it?

It is hopeless to expect, that the unrestrained liberty of the press in this particular will be interfered with. No government cares any longer to intervene in favor of religious belief. As governments they ignore the fact, that God has rights over the minds of his creatures.

It only remains then for individuals, who do care for faith, to refuse to aid and abet such publications until their editors and publishers show more solicitude to safeguard religious belief.

“Oh, what narrow-minded advice! People ought to know all sides of questions; it is unfair and cowardly not to listen to what every one has to say.” To this remonstrance, which will at once be made in many quarters, the Catholic believer at least, can most reasonably answer, that he does not choose to employ himself so idly as reading denials and contradictions of matters that, for him, were settled ages ago by expert authority, which he deeply respects, and on which he has long since made up his mind, that it is safer and wiser for him to rely. It is not cowardly — it is common sense and prudence not to listen to people, who only succeed in upsetting the mind on subjects which he deems very vital to his happiness, and who have nothing at all to offer in place of the hope they deprive him of, and leave him only in bewilderment. It is not unfair in him to demand, at least, the liberty of not listening to very bad and very unpractical advice. Take for instance Goodwin Smith’s article above referred to. He seeks to undermine all respect for the Bible, and flatly denies it to represent God’s instructions or the expression of His will to His creatures. Well, what are we to accept in place of it? Mr. Smith’s instructions to the world? Hardly! For hundreds of years this question

was deliberated upon, again and again, by intelligent, educated men, men of cultivated intellect, of different nationalities and different times, and they all have delivered a unanimous verdict in favor of this most ancient and venerated of books. That ought to be enough for any ordinary man, and the believing Catholic knows that it is enough for him. Nor does he feel he is surrendering his reason or his judgment in any way. He rather feels that he is vindicating his common sense and acting as all sensible men do in the ordinary affairs of life. There are legislative bodies and Supreme Courts of law everywhere. No reasonable citizen ever thinks he is surrendering his reason or judgment in accepting their decisions, and on occasion he is willing even to surrender his own private judgment, as the wisest and safest thing for him to do. If any one button-holes him and lays out arguments to prove to him that he should not do so, he says: "That is foolish talk," and he does not listen. Every sensible man applauds him for that. On subjects that to him are of much higher importance than State laws, why refuse to the believer the same approval that the citizen is sure to get for acting so sensibly?

Or take Mr. Huxley's assertive articles in the *Nineteenth Century*. Why should

the believer waste time in reading what hundreds of men, whom he knows better and respects more than Mr. Huxley, have told the world long ago were matters fixed and decided on as of faith, and founded on divine authority? All the Huxleys in the world could not change his opinion now, and even if they could they have nothing to offer on which he could rest for courage and hope as he rests on his present belief.

Therefore the best and only thing to do is to leave those men and dangerous literary symposiums severely alone. When you are walking out peacefully with a sound head and whole skin, and rocks are flying about, you do not go deliberately in the way of them. "But," it will be answered again, "Cardinals Manning and Newman and Gibbons contributed to the pages of these magazines."

That these distinguished men felt impelled to reply to outrageous attacks on revelation wherever opportunity afforded, is by no means a formal approval of the methods adopted by the publishers of those new eclectic periodicals. Probably they were glad of the chance to turn an evil, they could not abolish, into a vehicle for at least some good. Moreover there is no need to have recourse to these monthly papers to find out what these eminent churchmen have

to say ; that may be found, in better and fuller form, in their own published works.

2. *Free Public Libraries* are another danger. They are everywhere the rage in our days. Though free they are in another sense compulsory. People are compelled to pay for them in taxes, if private munificence has not stepped in to build and endow them. In another sense too they are really free — very free indeed. There is no censorship for any kind of book, except the openly obscene. The shelves of these libraries are as impartially open to irreligious falsehood, attacks on faith and the supernatural, and to religious truth, as the pages of the new symposium journals.

These library buildings, all handsome, substantial structures on which public money is unstintedly lavished, are said to have many advantages. They are nice cozy shelters for the poor and unemployed. No one will grudge them for that purpose, though no doubt something less pretentious would do in most places.

They keep the working classes out of saloons and gambling places. This is a matter of statistics that I am not competent to deal with, but if they do — and do them no worse harm, supply no poison for their souls — all right.

They are a great help to the poor scholar

and intelligent mechanic where books beyond their slender purses may be consulted—excellent. The best and newest literature, history, travels, fiction, etc., is there within easy reach of all who cannot have home libraries and who, out of working hours, are fond of reading and self-improvement—admirable too, only it must here be added that from universal experience the heaviest demand is always on the fiction department, especially by the youthful of both sexes, so the “self-improvement” is of a shady and doubtful kind.

They add to the culture and refinement, lessen ignorance and keep up education among the people. The experiment is too new, to pronounce yet with confidence, on these happy effects. It should be the wish of every one that they may do so. But it is just possible that just such miscellaneous reading may have a lowering effect on morality. And what will compensate a nation for that calamity?

Further than that, and a greater calamity is it to leave a people without any religious faith whatever. This is the recorded conviction of the wisest men in every generation. And beyond all doubt these free Public Libraries in one respect contribute to this danger. In nearly every one of them, on demand, you can obtain any of

the books that contain the most virulent attacks upon religious belief for the last hundred years.

And what is to be done?

We can not send Samsons through the world to pull them down. We do not boycott them like the symposium magazines — we should be summoned for taxes all the same.

There remains only reform. Every rate-payer, with a conscience for his country, should agitate for a stricter censorship over all books of a dangerous tendency, and the appointment of competent and upright censors. As no discrimination is to be hoped for in favor of any particular theological works, owing to the unhappy confusion introduced by the sects, *eliminate that department altogether* from the public libraries — allow no books of any kind treating of religion. That is about the best that can be done, and any body of united rate-payers could easily insist on it.

3. Legislators declare that this had to be done in the *Public School* system. The multitude of contending sects, they said, left them no choice, but to drop religion altogether from public education. This may be a good argument to make use of for purifying the Public Libraries, where the omission can do no harm.

But unfortunately such action, as applied to daily training of young children, constitutes the greatest of all dangers to the religious faith of a country, and, as experience is every day abundantly proving, is accountable for the vast amount of religious indifference among the adult population, wherever that system prevails.

It is a fallacy to say, that dropping all religion out of education was the only choice left to settle the question. There is more than one way of settling it.

If the body of men in charge of state affairs deem it, in their might, incumbent upon them to prescribe what kind of education the people's children shall receive—a right which is by no means incontestable—then, rather than close the school-room door upon all religion, they should have first tried, if they themselves still retain any due reverence for God's rights, less sweeping and less perilous measures.

The people are divided into two classes. One maintains that religion forms a part, and the most important part, of education. The other says it does not. Meanwhile the State, assuming the duty of educating the nation, levies taxes for the purpose from all, and yet positively refuses to have anything to say to religion. In the eyes of the first class, and they are no inconsiderable num-

ber, as the State fails in an essential part of its duty, they question the justice of the tax. But as they can not resist the might of the State, they obey the law under protest, and peacefully suggest another way out of the difficulty. They say, Remit us our proportion of this public tax, which we promise to apply to the education, that includes religious training for our children. That seems perfectly fair and just.

Legislators reply that this would be cumbersome and troublesome. Yes, but if it is fair and just and right, is it not worth the trouble? Does it not make the trouble a duty to that class of citizens?

They also make answer, that it would breed divisions in the country to the danger of the State. The advocates of religious training meet this with denial. They protest their loyalty to the Constitution, and offer any guarantee the State may see fit to exact, in the way of inspection of their schools and vigilance over their methods, in proof of their good faith.

It is objected, in the third place, that it would break up uniformity in the standard of national education, which everybody admits ought to be maintained.

Well, so do the religious educators admit it, and profess themselves ready to adopt the State standard in all secular branches,

where they do not clash with their religious views, which is only likely to happen in the subject of history — and they are moreover willing that the efficiency of their schools should be tested by State educational experts.

Could any demand be more manifestly fair than theirs, surrounded by such safeguards?

Why is it not granted then?

Because there is another large class, who want to fling over all religion, and who know that the present system admirably helps their desires. This is a proof of the danger to all belief, which results from these schools.

And (2) there is another equally large class whom, unhappily, sectarian jealousy, and long-cherished animosity to another section of their fellow-citizens, place in opposition to everything desired by them — “We will not listen to any demand *you* make or any plea *you* put forth,” they say; “we suspect and distrust you.” Shame! And this is a country which boasts of perfect freedom and toleration! In face of such opposition, it can only be hoped, that time will bring a more enlightened and kinder feeling. Meanwhile it rests upon those, who care for the preservation of religious faith, to do their part as citizens

to remove prejudice. This prejudice rests on the hollowest of cries, yet one that always gains the people's ear and excites their alarm. Whenever the demand is heard for sanction and aid to schools with religious training in their programme, the cry is raised, "Our great national school system is in danger!" It rings through the land and at once rallies multitudes of people in opposition, who never thought about the question, who do not even understand what the danger may be, or how, or whence it is to come.

It will be a duty to say, and to show, to such people that the national school system is not in danger, that this cry is as false as it is captious, that the real danger is loss of a people's religious faith, and the forfeit to the nation's detriment, of the greatest moral force for order and right conduct in this world.

"The home and the church," it is said again, "are the places for religious training, they are sufficient to avert this danger."

No doubt the home and the church bear their share of good influence upon the child, but experience shows that this influence does not reach far enough, and as often as not is more than outweighed by the loose example which the child witnesses in the religionless school. The child ought

to be habituated to a reverence for religion, and impressed with its great importance in this life and for the next. But how expect the child to deem that important, about which he never hears his teachers say one word on any of the six days of his weekly school-life? And if anything is ever said about it, it is, more often than not, a sneer from an agnostic teacher, or a mockery of it in the mouths of his companions. No, it must be taken as generally true, that unless religious ideas are interwoven with the chief occupation of the child's daily life, he will value them very little in his riper years. If religion is true, it is a crime, to contribute to such a result.

It is not, then, unfair to assert, that one of the greatest dangers to religious belief in our times is the system of purely worldly education, imposed on so many countries to-day, in spite of the unceasing protest of the oldest church in the world and the two hundred and fifty millions of its members.

4. Another, and no slight danger, is the extreme worldliness and luxurious living of the rich. Think of the vast sums expended on their purely selfish tastes and pursuits. Take a peep into those splendid and costly club-houses — the soft lounge of the Sybarite and Epicurean. Think of the floating-palace pleasure yachts, the gorgeous villas

at the summer resorts, the brilliant equipages and the dazzling toilettes, male and female. We shudder at the polygamous Turk, and the unbridled animalism of the Oriental, but who keeps up those hundreds of costly and nameless establishments of licentiousness in every Christian city? Place side by side in your thoughts, what you have learned of Christianity and its counsels, and say what could possibly be in common between the one picture and the other? The luxury-loving rich are of the "eat, drink, to-morrow we die" class, and their example, like a contagion, spreads down through the ranks of the less favored of fortune in a reduced degree. Until these people wake up to the dread reality, that here is not the place of final satisfaction and final reward, that it is a species of most reckless gambling to stake all on their few years of present life, faith can find no place among them or give anything to hope for.

5. Fiction, which is turned out by the ton to amuse the leisure hour, is another danger. What does the best of it parade across its stage as representative of human society? Why, a thronging crowd of unadulterated heathens. Even in the exquisitely refined and delicate stories of Miss Jane Austen, whom Lord Macaulay so highly praised, and in the admittedly clean novels of such masters

as Thackeray and Dickens,* you would never for a moment be reminded, that you were reading about the inhabitants of a world, once visited by a Divine Teacher, and a Divine Redeemer. Say what people may, all this cannot help having the effect of slowly lulling the constant reader into an unholy and unsafe forgetfulness, and forming the fascinated reader into the mould and stamp of his favorite hero and heroine — “These people seem to have got on famously without much ado about religion, why not I?” — he is apt to say.

The returning agnostic must not fail to take account of these five dangers, and healthily exercise his faith in not only avoiding, but doing battle against their deadly tendencies.

In the following brief chapter, I offer a few hints to smoothe the way for some minds, whom the many mysteries of faith hinder and perplex — without reason as will be seen.

* Just “to save his face,” as the Chinese say, Dickens has a few, very few, allusions to “The Master who was gentle and forgiving,” etc.

CHAPTER XII.

Mysteries.

We have to swallow a lot of "camels" in this world around us, why hesitate about a few more?

From where I am now sitting I can see, in a bee line, the great Lick observatory — sixteen atmospheric miles away ; it is thirty-two by the road. It looks just like a coach and six on the summit of the range. Yet I know that under that little white dome, there is the largest telescope yet mounted in the world ; and there are sidereal telescopes, elaborate photographic instruments, quadrants, sextants, true meridians — what not? There is a trained staff of observers and distinguished mathematicians, who live up there in six months of cloud and snow, five thousand feet above the heads, and away from the converse of their fellows, to discover for us the secrets of the stars. It cost nearly a million dollars to install that small establishment. And how little, how very little, they have been able to tell us ; and without at all depreciating their great devotedness and industry — how useless in the practical affairs of men has even *that little* proved to be ! They have given

us a few pictures. But as well photograph a "Fruit-vale" orange or a squash-melon, for all those pictures tell, in reality, of Mars or the moon. It was up there they discovered the fifth moon of Jupiter, a fact which Professor Ball informed his readers, in the *London News*, was of "vast importance." In the hard realities of life and its personal concerns, what is it to me whether Jupiter has five moons or fifty? They make stupendous calculations about the distances, the gravity and motions of planets, stars, double stars, comets and nebulae. Curious no doubt, but they are still gazing into mystery, and are as far from solving the familiar riddles close around them as ever. They have made great advances in knowledge of the sun. But who will tell us what heat really is, and why it acts so peculiarly? That sun is one million times the bulk of our earth; it is ninety-three millions of miles distant — very well. The flood of heat, cast out by a bulk like that, ought to entirely envelope and keep in equal warmth all parts of a small globe like the earth. So one would fancy. But ask Dr. Nansen to tell you what he saw and felt last year at the North Pole. No obliquity of the earth's axis can entirely satisfy one, as an explanation of that. But here is the real mystery of heat. It

travels all the ninety-three millions of miles to come to us — and for all that distance up to within a few feet *it is cold, icy cold* — proof; rise up straight into that sunshine in a balloon; in an hour or two you will be a frost-bitten corpse, the same sun still shining on you! Yet, what enormous initial heat must have been projected to warm that little bed out there in the garden, and make those spring flowers look so gay this morning! Last week Professor Holden and his friends up at the “Lick” had several feet of snow all round them, while we were sitting in shirt sleeves and wearing sunhats from the heat down here! The illustration of the glass of a hot-house usually offered in explanation of this, solves not, for me, the mystery why a thing that was icy cold becomes blazing hot by mere contact with the atmosphere, or by coming under it, so to speak. Yet you *believe* in heat. It is a thing that will blister you, if you do not believe in it. You, at the same time, really know nothing at all about the *thing itself*.

Up at that “Lick,” they will tell you the weight of this great earth — enormous — the figures in pounds would reach from here to there. Yet this tremendous bulk is floating about in, apparently, nothing! When we lie down upon it at

night, or step abroad upon it in the day, how do we know it will not give way under us and leave us there? We do not know at all, because everybody will tell you, if they are straight and honest, that *au fond* it is a mystery to us, yet you *believe* it will not give way, you never heard of such a thing. Centripetal and centrifugal forces — attraction and gravitation — keep it up. Yes, of course, but what really is the *thing*, the *res* of that force, no one ever has told, or ever will be able to tell us.

Again, this earth is round. Some belated people will say it is not, but I know it is, because some years ago I left the shore of that neighboring bay of San Francisco on the train, traveling eastward, and without ever turning back, I sailed in again through its Golden Gate, at an exactly opposite point of the compass! Well, two-thirds of its vast, round surface is water; why doesn't it spill? In the twenty-four days' stretch across the great Pacific, we all *believed* it would not spill, but *why*, not a soul of us knew. Of course, most of us did know about "diurnal motion," and "pressure of atmosphere," and such other school-boy explanation, but the whole vast phenomenon, its currents and the nicety of its tidal arrangements, who can ever comprehend?

While I write, too, there is a beautiful little creeper called the "Bridal-veil" silently throwing its small, tender tentacles around that porch there, climbing the training laths as skillfully as a sailor-boy shins a halyard. What is it makes it do that? What is the force within it which pushes and guides? We all *believed* it would surely do that, as soon as this spring-time was old enough, and the birds were singing again—but *how*, the wisest of us do not *know*.

These and a score of other things "as familiar as household words" mystify us, yet we delight to believe in them, all because they give us delight. And yet we grumble, and question, and doubt, and say we can not possibly believe a few other mysterious or miraculous things, because we cannot see through them at once. How absurd of us! And they come to us, too, on a word we ought to respect—at least that millions, as good as we, did respect and believe. It is backed, moreover, by a promise that if we but be humbly patient enough, this film-covered glass, through which the light comes only very "darkly," will some day be shattered, and the whole infinite range of knowledge and its unraveled secrets will be in full view, with a whole eternity to revel in—satiating this craving of ours to know. It is worth

waiting for, ever so patiently — ever so humbly, is it not? and vastly better, you will agree, than the “exterior darkness” where the other people are to be forever, who are both impatient and proud.

The men of science object, that in matters of faith or belief, we surrender our reason. There is a fallacy, and not an honest one, in that assertion. It is not our reason we surrender. It is our understanding. Our reason supplies us with valid and sufficient motives for believing what we cannot understand even in the common things of life. Our reason we are never forbidden to use, but many objects are withdrawn from our understanding, and though it cannot always serve us, it is no hindrance to our belief.

CHAPTER XIII.

Further Difficulties and Their Answers.

There are particular points of doctrine which some allege to be a block in the way of their unbelieving, or at least a cause of their doubting and their unrest of mind.

With such persons I have had no small experience. I have met them on the highways of the world — on the decks of ocean steamers, in railways and stage-coaches, in out-of-the-way towns of the New World, on lonely sheep-farms, in hotels and in private homes.

It may be useful to relate this experience, and it may prove helpful to others like them, to subjoin the answers to their difficulties.

I remember a young person on board the *S. S. Rhotomahana* coasting around New Zealand, saying so earnestly: “If I could only know for certain what God wants me to do, there is nothing, it seems to me, that I would not do for Him. * * * No, no, not what is in books or what men say — I want Him to tell me Himself.”

Reply. — You want what nobody else in the world is privileged to have — private revelation, is that reasonable? He certainly gave instructions, fully enough, what each one is to do — they have been handed down by tradition accurately enough. True, men have confused some parts of them — but still on proper inquiry they are determinable and millions agree about them — unreasonable expectation is foolish and futile.

I remember the wealthy young *squatter*,

as the *Arumac* drew out from wharf to resume her Australian coasting trip, looking wearily over the busy scene and saying, "What is the meaning of it all?"—that is, the life of men—the world we had been discussing.

Reply.—Unaided by information from the Author of it we never can know. Hence the need of revelation, and our duty to consult it and submit to what it tells us. Guesses from the data around us will never answer your question.

I remember the celebrated meteorologist laying down for a smoking-room audience—a sympathetic one—in mid-ocean, that the only comfortable way to live was just to follow all the instincts of nature when it can be conveniently done, they must be right, else we should not have them.

Reply.—It is honorable to be a naturalist in botany and the laws of storms as you are—but dishonor and shame and remorse are sure to follow the naturalism you advocate outside your profession—there is nothing more certain than that, as abundant experience around us in the world shows, law courts and jails are the sad necessities imposed by the "instincts of nature" that you would have men follow when it pleased them—therefore there is something wrong with nature—

human nature — in many respects, since it leads to such disaster. It needs restraint and discipline, and only when corrected by a higher teaching, it can be trusted at all.

I remember the young American sugar-planter, exiled in the tropics, guessing that whoever put him in this world would “look after him all right,” and if he were to go on existing forever, the same disposer of him would no doubt continue to do so, he “guessed he’d leave it just like that.”

Reply. — If He put you here just like a piece of furniture — a table or a rocking-chair, no doubt he would; but if he put you here, and gave you the means expressly designed for looking after yourself, do not be too sure that He will not hold you responsible for not making use of them. And that you could not possibly make a mistake about it, He told you that way he wanted you and expected you to use them, in looking after yourself — at least thousands of your fellow-beings — intelligent fellow-beings — quite as intelligent as you, perhaps much more so, think He has. An English writer of repute declared, that he “would rather be an atheist and believe there was no God, than believe there was a God who having created rational beings, gave

them no intimation of His will, nor made any communication to them whatever — the former is a daring creed, but the other is a foolish one.”

I remember the famous humorist — serious for the moment, while we plowed the Atlantic, wanting to know how the God, represented to us by the preachers, could be a possibility in view of such a world as this is: and the English mechanic-engineer saying with an air of relief, but as if the relief were not quite comfortable, “Yes, a good many people now say there is no such being at all.”

Reply. — The humorist in question is a well-known *persifleur* of religion — perhaps since Voltaire’s time no other author — certainly none in the English tongue, has done so much harm to religious belief, by sneers veneered with wit, than he. He acknowledged on that very afternoon that he had passed a most irreligious youth — got no instruction and knew nothing of religion, but what he afterwards picked up himself. Besides, on his own admission, and to judge from a few choice personal anecdotes, that portion of his existence had been none of the cleanest. However, I told him he was going against the universal sense of mankind in every time and place,

which is not a safe thing to do, and that the reason this world, as it is, did not better reflect the Supreme Being in all His goodness, was owing to the gift of free will to men, and the exceedingly bad use that was made of it — “bringing death into the world and all our woe —” and the bad use that many still continue to make of it. For our friend the engine-maker, I might have quoted the opening of a certain Psalm — “The fool says in his heart there is no God.” But if any good is to be done to such people you must never be offensive to them. Prove to them there *is* a God by the very necessity of the case — no other way of accounting for our world and its teeming life.

I remember the exceedingly agreeable and perfectly gentlemanly young “station owner,” fond of reading in the lonely evenings to the sound of the Pacific surf; very advanced in his opinions about “pre-historic man” and the myths of revelation. Though reared in the Church of England and married to a convent-educated and Catholic wife, he declared his utter inability to believe what his Christian neighbors seemed to do so easily.

Reply. — See the danger of reading books by subtle and accomplished speculators

without any previous training for argument, and never having heard the proper explanations of the leading facts of revelation. Pre-historic man solves no mystery of the creation — it pushes it back a step, that's all.

But pre-historic man has by no means been certainly discovered. He has turned out to be a mistake of the geologists, or at least many skilled in that *experimental investigation* — geology — it can hardly be called a science, certainly not an exact one — admit, that the evidence for him is only slenderly partial — therefore entirely inconclusive. Thirdly, what does it matter to us, as a practical question, how old our race is; the individual responsibility for individual conduct remains for each one of us, and that is what should chiefly occupy our attention. Again, we should be chary of talking of myths, where so much that is mysterious and inexplicable to us, lies under our very eyes all around. There is a point in all human reasoning, where something must be taken without proof, if reason itself is not to sink into the void where folly reigns, and madness rages.

As to inability to believe like his neighbors — were he as humble as they

were; had he confessed his sins and repented of them as they had; had he quietly and trustfully prayed daily as they do, belief would have been as easy to him as to them. *Without those things it is easy to no one.* Nor is the question of personal sin a rash judgment. Without certain fixed moral restraints and instructive guidance in youth, it is impossible for any one to escape falling into temptation, and having sinned, and sin remaining, a partition is raised between God and the soul. Until that is removed the peace of believing will never come. It was not for nothing we were told, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." This implies its converse, Unblessed are the unclean of heart, for they cannot see God.

I remember the Queensland "slop-shop" keeper who told me to write him down an atheist. He said this was a country of free thought, and he did not want any more trouble than his business gave him.

Reply. — True, every one was free, *before the law*, to think as he pleased, but there was a higher law before which he was not free, else why did he not with equal freedom *think he was not to die*; think that he could arrange for his continued

existence just as it suited him; that, he could not do. Therefore, there *was* a Power superior to him of which he had better take account. His business no doubt demanded attention and should have it, but a day would come when business and all he ever gained by it, should stay behind, and he would have to go forth alone, as little consulted as when he was sent here. Is it not a little daring, then, to brave a Power so much greater than he, and not try to find out what that Power requires to be done, beyond mere business, which is not the ultimate end of man?

I remember the old fellow on an American "ranch" who boasted — being then in the very "sere leaf," indeed — that he *never had done anything wrong* (in his numerous family such a thing as prayer was unknown); he was not afraid to die. He had been pretty successful after a hard struggle in this life, and if there happened to be another life, he would struggle there too, and no doubt meet with the same success. Moreover, he had been a good Mason and everybody knew that the Free Masons were too great a body to fear anything or anybody? "*They* were all right."

Reply. — A seared conscience is the greatest of calamities. It is the eternal judg-

ment already passed. It is a most difficult thing to revivify with new sap. But it is the only chance. It may be done by convincing this self-satisfied soul that he had done wrong, by omission for instance. "Remember to keep holy My Sabbath day," was that never infringed in course of your long life? "Thou shalt adore thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." You rarely, if ever, even acknowledged Him by prayer, and so forth. As for that confidence in the great Masonic body, be not deceived about their importance or help. Why, they were unheard of before the seventeenth century and originated among the Socinians and other free-thought Protestants of these comparatively recent times. As a mutual help society you may have derived certain money benefits from it, but its methods are suspect to all candid minds. If *all* its objects are good why act like *conspirators* and bind people by oath and (sometimes) under penalty of death to secrecy? It becomes apparent every day that their methods are either foolish or wicked. They are losing caste among all sensible and respectable people, and it may be safely predicted that, in time, this sensational association will die oblivion's death, like all other absurd

conspiracies. The first notice ever taken of them by the Popes, was in 1738. Clement XII. explained who they were, and what were their objects, and forbade all Catholics to have anything to do with them. If they had existed *always* throughout Europe is it likely that the watchful head of European society, the Pope, would never have heard of them before or noticed them? — most unlikely.

This condition of soul in old age always arises, from keeping the mind in culpable religious ignorance through life. If people would read even the Catechism occasionally this could never happen.

I remember the Colonial young lady — High school graduate — who professed to believe in nothing, and was heard to long for some one to arise who should free the world from this “bother” about religion.

Reply. — (I regret to say that this case is but a type of numerous young ladies to be met in the Colonies, as an outcome of free, compulsory and secular education. While I was in Wellington, N. Z., a young girl of 19 walked out one fine summer morning from her parents' well-to-do-home, furnished with sketching materials, and sat down in the public park apparently for a practice in drawing, of which she was rather fond. After

a while, she there deliberately took a pistol from her pocket and blew her brains out!) The best remedy for our young friend, whom everybody admitted to be as amiable as she was fair, turned out to be association with a good Catholic family in which there were well-brought up young girls like herself, who did not preach to her or at her, but who won her by the happy and unostentatious example of their own lives, and in time of need did her a gentle and generous service.

I remember the amiable and hospitable lady born far south of the Equator, who was "trying Theosophy;" liked it very well, but had not got so far as to reconcile herself to the fact that her four beautiful children had already been cats or mice or snakes, may be, in the pre-existence of the second or third *plano-sphere*; her husband was a *Rosecrucian* and very deep in the occult.

Reply: — I gave her a "Life of Madame Blavatsky," by a gentleman of St. Petersburg, whose work has been translated into English and published at the cost of the London "Psychical Research Society." That work must conclusively end forever, in all reasonable and respectable minds, the theosophic craze. On

her evidence Madame Blavatsky is proved to be but a clever adventuress, who did not stick at the meanest tricks of a charlatan to deceive and delude her dupes. This book may be had from any London book agent, and is most useful to have just now to lay *Mahatmas and spooks*.

I remember the man who was puzzled to know — if Christ were God and came to redeem the world, why was it not *visibly* redeemed? Did the world, as we see it, look as if it were redeemed? The world is full of sin, and suffering, and death. Then he told a story of a poor old negro Methodist of Carolina, who had had “salvation” preached at him all his life, and who was very religious in his own bothered way; one day an earthquake happened that shook things up “pretty considerable” and scared the old man so that he took to his prayers. “Oh A’mighty God,” he said, “you come right down heah and fix things up, but don’t you send yo’ Son dis time, come yo’self — dis job is too big and mebbe He can’t do it.” He excused the profanity by the great simplicity of the poor, old soul, but he had no doubt but the same idea was struggling through the old dark-ey’s brain that was such a trouble to his own mind. The thing was *de facto* not accomplished.

Reply. — Redemption, as has always been explained, does not, primarily, regard the earthly condition of the race. Its effect is to make it possible for man to regain a title to the “eternal inheritance” — “*facta redemptione*” — the price having been paid for him. The title had been hopelessly lost to him, and infinite reparation was needed — co-equal with the character of Him who was wronged, by revolt against His command. This was done through the Incarnation; and through that alone could it have been effected. But it has not ended man’s state of probation — it now gives him a powerful and salutary motive for effort; he is assured that he can earn the great reward, and his earning power, so to speak, is made effective and secure.

It is not accurate to say, that there are no effects visible in the world from the Incarnation and its work. A vast change for the better has come over the lives of men, who by the good use of their free will have lent themselves to the influence of Christianity. Comparisons of Christian lives with the most cultured among ancient peoples, prove this beneficial change beyond all doubt. And the contemporary knowledge we have of peoples not yet Christianized,

affords evidence of Christianity's elevating and civilizing influence. If sin abounds and its necessary shadow, suffering, it comes from the perverse use of a will left free to choose evil courses, which unfortunately the majority do, in spite of and in opposition to the teachings and protests of Christianity; and so have apparently discredited by their conduct the work of the Redemption. Death for the good is not an evil; you ought to be a little more advanced in reasoning power and intelligence than the "negro from Carolina."

I remember the proprietor of a New Zealand homestead picturesquely situated by the "wide Pacific strand" — a man of more than average education, who was very aggressive against all things of faith. His mind had even taken an angry turn. His mother, to whom he had been much attached, had died in the slow suffering of cancer. This incensed him against the supernal Power — he used to say, "If I could only get at it — !" He assumed the role of an infidel propagandist on all occasions, even with his poor workmen. He had only two children. One had been baptized by the care of the grandmother, who was "an Anglican;" when she died he kept the second unbaptized — as an

experiment to show off against "the other fellow." He had made his gentle and amiable little wife as great an unbeliever as himself.

Reply. — He was reared in the Anglican communion. Time has sadly demonstrated that *private judgment* is the portico of the free thought, which means thought utterly unbridled and unlicensed — a thing that is fast making human society unbearable, for reasonable and civilized men. Mrs. Besant, the wife of an Anglican parson, has also informed the world that the sight of her first baby, agonizing in diphtheria, steeled her heart against God and religion. It is as unfair, as it is shallow, to charge to God every particular of the condition of secondary causes who are free agents and *endowed with faculties for self-help and mutual protection*. It looks a fair bargain that the First Cause should have given over a portion of His creation to such agents furnished with sufficient capital, so to speak, to get along. He added to it besides a great liberality of treatment, never interfering with them for their allotted time, withdrawing his visible presence lest it should inconvenience or hamper them in any way; and for all

that only exacting a reasonable service and acknowledgment. The accidents of all kinds occurring in this temporary condition of things, (and sickness and diseases are among them) regard the secondary agents. To expect Him to interfere in every case exceeds the limits of His part of the bargain as a *Provisor generalis* — the primary Providence. It is much to have been assured by Him, that full and just compensation shall be made to those who submissively suffer; "*Merces tua magna nimis.*" It is charged, that it is inhumane in Him to look on at suffering, *able to relieve and cure, and not doing so*; even men would not be so unfeeling were it in *their* power. But this is making God, *human* merely. We hear a good deal from infidels about *anthropomorphism*, which obtains, say they, when believers reduce God merely to human dimensions in their conception of Him. But what are *they* doing in the case discussed? Why, they are supposing God to be exactly like the human being, and blaming Him for not being so. A perpetual interference for relief of every pang or pain, no matter how prolonged, would upset the whole established order, which no rational being, at present, looks for.

If this state were *final* perhaps we might, with a show of reason, look to Him for help at every turn. But it is not final, we know; and the general expectation is, that the day of full compensation and explanation will surely come.

With regard to the stupid and *unfair* experiment of this man with his unbaptized boy, the same explanation holds good as was given above about redemption. The effects await on the action of free will and its use, and the sacrament *chiefly refers to the spiritual order and the eternal future state*. Baptism is not a visible and miraculous transformation in the present; no one pretends that it is. The titled poet who returned a Buddhist from Japan, delights to dwell on the superiority of manners and bearing of Japanese children over Christian children. Besides that this depends on what kind of Christian children he has been acquainted with; he forgets that we learn from other travelers in that country, as intelligently observant as he, that the Japs in general even from a tender age, are the most shamelessly lascivious of peoples—and the Chinese, as is well known, are hardly better.

Finally, with regard to this man's wish "to get at" the great First Cause—

merely to fancy this little five-feet long creature "getting at" the mighty Maker of the universe, has something so sublimely ludicrous in it, that it would amuse, if its impiety did not terrify.

I remember the souls troubled about prayer. One said it was talking into a great silence; it was hard not to grow tired of saying things all by yourself, to which no sound or word was ever heard in reply; that it required a force of imagination, which many people do not possess, to fancy God present with us or listening when we pray.

Reply. — Prayer of course is not like a human conversation. It is impossible without faith. Prepared by what faith teaches about it; that there is a God who is interested in us because he owns us; who wishes us to look on Him as a Father, and expects us to depend on and confide in Him; who is all powerful, able, and willing to help in all things for our good — then with such conviction in mind, it will appear far from talking into void, or tiresome or needing *imagination*. At the same time every one must confess to a kind of natural need of communing about himself with *some one*. This comes from the fact of our individuality. The peculiar and distinct per-

sonality each one has, makes us uncomfortable to feel alone and isolated amid accidents and fortunes of a temporary existence. This is a natural pre-disposition to prayer. It is evidenced in the child telling all about its little self and its concerns to its mother or its care-taker. Nor does the same want ever leave the man, which proves the reasonableness of the assertions of faith.

Another had given up prayer because it seems so unmanly — cowardly in fact — to grovel perpetually, to beseech and beg.

Reply. — An unmanly or cowardly act is to refuse to face a danger, or to endure a hardship, or to shirk a painful or laborious task, when duty and a greater good call on us to do and dare. Where do we do any of these mean things in prayer? We feel our dependence, knowing we have been created by a Power superior to ourselves, exalting the qualities of that Creator, idealizing His great and good attributes, is so far from groveling that it exalts our idea of ourselves — increases our esteem for ourselves and gives us courage. It is only fair and just in us and manly too, to acknowledge our dependence. We ask to be strengthened as to what He wants us to do, and make ready to do it at any cost

or trouble to ourselves. Recognizing in ourselves an inherent weakness to do what is good and noble, we seek His help and encouragement to overcome our sluggish inclinations. What is cowardly or unmanly in all that? Why, it is brave and manly, and rational.

We break His commands and sue for pardon. If we did not, it would be contempt to the High Court and most insulting to Him. Among ourselves men do not commend or admire the braggart or desperado, who violates his country's laws and despises its courts of justice. The man who assaults a battery of Maxim guns with a pea-shooter or a pop-gun, is not set down among the manly and the brave — he is a fool. Not less a fool is the man who daunts the Omnipotent and braves the eternal punishment.

You have to study the difference between the brave man and a fool.

Another was troubled at seeing people in long hours of prayer before the altar at such times as the *Quarant' ore*, or Nuns and Monks in their chapels — they come and go and never the slightest notice taken of them, or at least sign of approval — how wearisome!

Reply. — These good people know what they are doing. They are quite satisfied

about the silence, recognize it as part of the trial of faith, and are content to await the end, knowing that the day for silence will be over soon and knowledge of all things imparted. I was once surprised to find in a novel of the sensuous school this sentence: "When men and women rise from prayer and find themselves better, that prayer is answered."

That is the only *notice* those good souls want or expect.

Another found a great difficulty in the text of Matt. vi:7, where much speaking in prayer is forbidden by our Lord; in fact He there confines all prayer to one short form — the *Our Father* — and the direct contradiction to that, in the voluminous prayer-books and Breviaries, is sanctioned and enjoined by the Church.

Reply. — That text is aimed at the correction of one special abuse — the ostentatious and empty piety of the Pharisees — as may plainly be seen by reading the whole passage.

In other places when not addressing Himself to an abuse, our Lord inculcates frequent and repeated prayer and gave the example Himself of long prayer — *prolixius orabat*.

The *Our Father* is a short form, it is

true, but prayers of all kinds, no matter how long, are nothing but the expansion of that divine compendium, as ascetic writers often demonstrated.

Another adduced puzzling cases of people who prayed long and earnestly for a manifestly good thing and were not heard — one especially about people weakly addicted to the drink habit. He had known some who were so ashamed and conscious of that terrible weakness, that they left nothing undone, followed strictly every spiritual advice, novenas, communions, confessions, for help, and to no avail — they fell again and again.

Reply. — It is nowhere taught that miracles follow prayers on all occasions. Neither must it be looked for, that prayer should result in loss of will-power in the petitioner in any given action or habit — one's will is not suddenly taken away and grace substituted for it. We must be satisfied to struggle against temptation aided by grace, with a will very much inclined to the evil *whose habit we culpably* began.

In the case cited there were relapses, it is true, but to my knowledge there were intervals of abstention and improvement, and that was a decided gain. We can not know the workings of an individual

soul, or what flaw there may be in its disposition, to account for failure, but it is there, be assured, lies the cause. Our Lord promised that everything we ask the Father in His name shall be granted—yes, but it must be in everything—in matter and disposition—entirely worthy of the holy name we ask in.

I remember the soul distressed by the sight of a crucifix; the thought would keep rising, What kind of a Being or Justice can that be, who could look upon a spectacle so horrible and be pleased or placated or appeased by it or even accept it at all? Then the question would come—If that is God—if Christ is God—have we not the curious situation of God *offering Himself to Himself*—Himself suffering that His own self or His own Justice may be satisfied? There are souls who would rather suffer any loss themselves than accept anything so cruel from another.

Reply.—This opens up the whole mystery of the Incarnation, and it is a very great one. We can never hope to fathom that here below. Convince yourself of having been assured on very good authority, accepted by millions as wise as you, that unless that happened it would fare very badly with you and with all this world. Relieve yourself also with the opinion,

that all the cruel details of that sacrifice were not essential, because a word — an act — one tear of a *divine* and *human* person, would have been price enough for many condemned races — all his actions being of infinite value — but Christ chose Himself to undergo them to increase men's notion of the great guilt of sin and offer a striking contradiction in His own person to pride, lust, and guilty indulgences, to which all men are, as everybody knows, and as he foreknew, so prone.

It is not accurate to say that God offered Himself to Himself barely. There was present in the offering the human nature which He assumed suffering, too, and whose suffering clothed round by a divine personality, became infinite in value and co-equal with the magnitude of an offense done to infinite justice and majesty. About souls suffering loss rather than accept for themselves so cruel a sacrifice — they little know what they are talking about. On the assurance of revelation there is nothing more certain than that, if that loss did overtake them, they would be eternally sorry for their pride-inspired and ignorant folly.

I remember others disturbed by reading about the world in the time of Christ. It

was in a very bad state — there were teeming populations in the Farther East, in India, Thibet, China, Japan — Brahmins, Buddhists, Confucians, Shinto idol worshipers. Black Africa was crowded with naked savage cannibals reveling in lust, slaughter, blood, cruelty — worse than the horrors there to-day, no doubt. The vast Roman Empire had altars for impure idols and temples for a hundred gods. The islands of antipodean seas were peopled as now, with fearful flesh-eating tribes. Christ came to teach and to save all, yet He seemed to take no care at all about these hundreds of millions, living and dying while He lived. He never alluded to their existence. His work was restricted — very local. A very small number knew he was there at all, and fewer still knew him for the Messiah, and when He died, notwithstanding all His miracles, scarcely any at all believed or were converted.

Reply. — The same difficulty shadows the whole history of the Jews. It lies in the words *chosen people*. The fact is certainly before us that they were divinely favored before all other and more numerous peoples. At the same time it clears away a good deal of the mystery to remember that *all* peoples in the far-back centuries were Hebrews once — all of the

one stock. The human race was once small in number, but in the growth and vast increase there was a dispersion-process and a winnowing according to deserts; and God dealt to each the measure of His justice and treatment of His wisdom, just as they deserved from Him. Abraham and his seed deserved best from Him and so were made His favored agents. The rest were permitted to wander apart and left to their own devices, just as we see most of them *still* — yellow, red, brown and black men — idolaters and cannibals.

Christ did not choose to appear simultaneously and preach to them all, though being divine, He might have done so, it is true. Equally true that millions still remain ignorant of Him and His divine mission. But to argue with justice from this and similar facts, regarding peoples, we should know the whole state of the case — concerning the history of their conduct and dealings with God. Manifestly we do not know, and never can know that; so it is but reasonable to assume a neutral, if a waiting, attitude. Had Christ come in that clearly superhuman character, then the present order of trial would have there and then ended. Belief should have been

compelled, and faith dispensed with. That kind of coming, however, is promised and will happen — when all things shall be made manifest.

As to the fewness of the converted, notwithstanding all the miracles our Lord performed, it must be remembered that the immense numbers — 5,000 after one sermon and 3,000 after another — who became Christians immediately on the apostle's preaching Christ crucified and risen, must have been those who had seen Him and witnessed His miracles, and some the subjects of them in their own persons, else they would never have yielded so readily.

I remember those again who were saddened in mind and doubtful of a divine goodness by the cruelties of life; the hideous deformities and diseases, the slow agony of wasting cancers and leprosy and the like; the blood-thirstiness that breaks out in all mankind, savage and civilized alike; then the cruelties of the animal world; all the fierce beasts and poisonous things; tigers, lions, snakes, jaguars, wild elephants, sharks and sword-fish, vultures, hawks, eagles — the butcher bird that impales its living food on a thorn and sits watching its writhings — the sea louse that eats into the spinal marrow of the

whale and drives the monster mad — the Kea of New Zealand that digs its beak into the flesh of the live sheep for the kidney fat and only that — who gave them all those pitiless instincts?

Reply. — Why should such things trouble *your* mind? Have you personally any great reason to complain of God's goodness to you? If unhappily there are people subject to the fearful ills that flesh is heir to, as a consequence of the aboriginal blight of evil, has not God imparted instincts of compassion and mutual help to his creatures? All are not so afflicted — far from it — only the few, very few, comparatively, and it *generally* comes from the accidents occasioned by secondary causes; and is it not beautiful to see the sane always ready to succor the unsound, exhibiting rare and unselfish virtue, and conferring comparative happiness on the afflicted? Men are thus made the vice-regents — the secondary Providence of God to one another in the world. The old scholastics have discussed the animals and their ways. It was their opinion that, having been made for man, and originally subject to him, it was part of his penalty when he fell, that the animals should break away from him into a wild

state and become his enemies, and thus diverted, by his fault, from their original destination, they have ramped about, soured — lost — waste parts of the creation, in fact, ever since; but the Creator has not left man at their mercy; man still holds the upper hand, in the main, as everybody knows.

Human blood-thirstiness is the ruinous part of a structure that once was noble, and which still shows not unsightly bits of what it originally was. It can only be accounted for on the ground of *the fall into moral evil* — the failure in the first trial of free will — another part of sin's penalty.

The instances of set and deliberate cruelty of animals are far from being authenticated, nor are such practises uniform and habitual. A sheep farmer of long experience in New Zealand told me, that the Kea bird learned to locate the kidney fat of the sheep from his habit of prowling about the station slaughter-yard and picking at the sheep-skins spread out to dry with the wool down. The most toothsome bit was this fat in the region of the kidneys or liver, and when the skins were not there to be picked, he went for the sheep on the hills and locating the part where he got his so-apppe-

tizing morsel, he fastened his claws in the wool and sunk his beak in the soft flesh above the haunches, even then he did not always strike the fat directly either, or neatly! Other birds, from imitative habit, copied the knowing ones and so this curious custom of theirs came to be.

For the rest, what are animals to you; you have not created them; you are not responsible for them? They are very near us, and they are as far away from us as mystery; they are strangers to us in reality. They live their own peculiar life and there's an end of it.

I remember others, and they were many, who were incensed against the doctrine of Hell. Some felt that a Being who could look on at the tortures of his own creature for eternity, could not be an object of any one's love, admiration and adoration; others, that they were doing God a service, vindicating Him, by repudiating what they called a horrible doctrine; others asserted that it was a fiction invented by men to hold other men in subjection by force of terror—a horrid nightmare imposed on human minds by the designing and so on.

Reply.—No doubt Hell is an awful doctrine. No use in saying that it is easy to be calmly reconciled to it. But there

is no use either in denying it. Viewing the minds of men as a whole, we find that in every time, it formed an inseparable portion of religious belief. This extrinsic evidence throws doubt at once on your denial. And the thing is so awful that—presented even as doubtful—it should urge every one to take no risk, to seek further and make himself very sure that he is making no mistake about what may result in such a frightful disaster to himself. For it is said to be eternal and a punishment.

Then he should remember that if this be so, no amount of assertion or repudiation on his part can in the least alter *the fact*. And if our Lord ever revealed anything about the unseen in unmistakable terms, it was this sombre fact.

There is one comfort at any rate. We are not there yet, and there are ways of escaping going there. And the ways are so well known and within such easy reach, that we can be morally sure of never having to go there, if we like.

The only reason why any one goes to that dreadful place, is that he departs from life in a state of overt rebellion and contempt for the great Creator, who gave him his being. Where else could he go? Surely he could not expect to

be cordially greeted and richly rewarded and welcomed hospitably, after such reckless and daring conduct as his. Those who have power in this world are not accustomed to welcome to their homes, and dine, and be hail-fellows with the men who despise their authority and trample on the laws — such a thing was never heard of. Do you think it will be any different in the realm beyond the grave? The love of God comes irresistibly with serving him and acknowledging Him — above all, with a good conscience. The truth is, a good deal of this questioning about Hell arises from *not* having a good conscience and knowing very well why — having got into scrapes by sinning freely, it takes a lot of whistling to keep up courage, like the boy passing through the graveyard. When you pass in your walks by a convict-prison, you know very well there is a painful state of things going on there — fellow-beings undergoing severe and often dreadful punishment. You return to your dinner none the less with appetite unimpaired. You do not rail against the judge and are not the least angry with the jury who convicted. Why? Because you very sensibly say — Justice demanded it. “But it need not be eternal,” you say. To assert that, you must

be in a position to understand all about God's justice, which you are not, *that* being infinite, and above our limited comprehension. Besides, between you and me, is there anything less than the sanction of *eternal* punishment that will restrain the run of men from vice? You know there is not. Your rearrangement of things for God, is, to say it without wishing to be impolite, an impertinence. It does not concern us; we are not masters here. If there is one thing clearer than another, it is that we are wholly dependent—otherwise we could settle down comfortably and arrange to stay in life as long as we pleased. But we cannot stay. Some one will call some day. So it is wisest to prepare to go in submission, and you may be sure everything will be right with us.

The general disposition of things here below and our destinies are not in our hands, but it is given to us to make the best of them and, turning them to our advantage, we need not go to Hell.

But enough—the famous and devout author of the “Imitation” propounds rather dogmatically that “they who travel much are *rarely* (without the emphasis) sanctified”—by the way, how did he know since he never went anywhere?—

but be that as it may, the widely-traveled meet, by the waysides and on the high-roads of life, many odd specimens of humanity and fall in with curious phases of human psychology. If their experiences take a little of the spiritual shine off themselves, there is left them a compensation from the good, or instruction, or pleasure that others may derive from reading those experiences even in the very humble way here presented.

THE END.

215.

